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THE PROPHETS AND THEIR TIMES

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THE PROPHETS AND THEIR TIMES

By

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University of Chicago

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PREFACE

The prophets are perennially interesting. They represent the religion of Israel at its best. They were the spokesmen of the progressive idealism of their day, the organs of a noble discontent with the established order, the heralds of a golden age.

New books on the prophets are always in order. Each generation needs their message. That message, however, is not easily comprehended in its fulness. The words of one age are not intelligible to the citizens of another, without interpretation. When to the difference in time and circumstance there is added a difference in race, language, and culture, the difficulty of understanding is greatly increased.

The purpose of this book is not to preach the message of the prophets to the men of today. It is rather to show as clearly as possible what the prophets were trying to do and say in their own generation. To this end a knowledge of the historical background of their work is necessary. The prophets were students of their times. They were vitally concerned in all that was going on in the political and the social world. They sought to guide the course of events into the right channels. Hence no understanding of their work is possible apart from a knowledge of what was going on in the world about them. The more accurately the conditions amid which they worked are known the more complete will be our appreciation of their message.

The world of the prophets was always changing. New

forces and new personalities were constantly coming to the fore. Our knowledge of that world has been greatly enriched in recent decades by the discovery and decipherment of cuneiform and hieroglyphic records. Discoveries are always in progress. Each new find changes the situation for us, and makes necessary modifications in our interpretations. The recent reading of documents regarding the fall of Nineveh is a case in point. We not merely have to change the date of that event, but we must rewrite the history of the last decade of the Assyrian Empire. That involves changes in the reading of contemporary Hebrew history. Such things call for new books on prophecy.

In recent years the study of the prophets has concerned itself increasingly with the psychology of prophecy. That study is as yet in its infancy; but much may be expected of it. Some use has been made of that approach to the prophets in this book. Limitations of space and the necessarily somewhat precarious character of the results of much of that study thus far have precluded giving it larger recognition in this handbook. But careful work in that field will produce much fruit.

My obligations to the world of scholars, past and present, are too numerous to mention, but are none the less profoundly and gratefully realized. No one man is sufficient for these things. If this interpretation of the prophets has any special value, it is largely due to what has been learned from my predecessors. May the reader join me in a vote of thanks to them.

J. M. Powis Smith

University of Chicago
Christmas Eve, 1924

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CHAPTER I

THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS

The term "sons of the prophets" is one easily misunderstood. In reality it implies nothing as to the family relationships of the prophets. It is an example of idiom occurring frequently in the Old Testament. When Noah is called "a son of five hundred years,"[1] we understand that he was five hundred years old; when Saul characterized David as "a son of death,"[2] he meant that David ought to be slain; and when the sage spoke of "the son of a fool,"[3] he was not predicating the folly of the father, but rather that of the son. Similarly, the "sons of God" in Gen. 6:2 are simply "divine beings," beings possessing the characteristics or essence of divinity; even as "son of man" when applied to Ezekiel emphasizes his humanity in contrast to the deity of God who speaks to him. In like manner, "sons of the prophets" are persons endowed with the spirit of the prophets,[4] and not at all sons of prophets according to the flesh. Thus the term "sons of the prophets" is used in the early literature to denote the body of prophets as a whole. When Amos said, "I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet,"[5] he was repudiating the entire prophetic movement of his day, with which he refused to be classified.

[1] Gen. 5:32; cf. Jonah 4:10.

[2] I Sam. 20:31. [3] Prov. 10:1; 17:25; 19:13.

[4] Cf. "son of valour" in I Sam. 18:17, meaning "a valiant man": and "son of worth" in I Kings 1:52, meaning "a worthy man."

[5] Amos 7:14.

These sons of the prophets represent the earliest stage in the history of prophecy in Israel. They were a gregarious folk, living and working in groups or communities. When Saul left Samuel, after receiving the announcement of and anointing for his kingship, he met a company of the "sons of the prophets" on the road, prophesying as they went along;[1] when David fled from Saul to Naioth in Ramah, he found himself in the midst of a group of "sons of the prophets";[2] when Elisha helped one of the "sons of the prophets" who had lost a borrowed axe, a community of them was engaged in the task of enlarging the living quarters of the group;[3] when Ahab sought the counsel of the prophets of Yahweh regarding his proposed campaign against Ramoth Gilead, they came together four hundred strong and spoke as one man;[4] when Elisha lost his leader, Elijah, he was supported by groups of the sons of the prophets at Bethel, at Jericho, and at Gilgal;[5] and when Jezebel was persecuting the prophets, Obadiah hid a hundred of them in caves.[6]

What constituted these men prophets? We are told that the prophet was in olden times called a "seer."[7] That is the title given to Samuel and to Gad, one of David's prophets,[8] and later applied to prophets in general.[9] This means that they were credited with the power to see things hidden from the eye of the common man. It was said of Samuel, for example, "everything that he says

[1] I Sam. 10:5 ff.
[2] I Sam. 19:20.
[3] II Kings 6:1–7.
[4] I Kings 22:6.
[5] II Kings 2:3–18; 4:38 ff.; cf. 4:1 and 9:1.
[6] I Kings 18:4.
[7] I Sam. 9:9 (cf. vss. 10 f., 18 f.).
[8] II Sam. 24:11.
[9] II Sam. 15:27; Amos 7:12; Isa. 29:10; 30:10; Mic. 3:7; II Kings 17:13; I Chron. 9:22; 21:9; 25:5; 26:28; 29:29; II Chron. 9:29; 12:15; 16:7, 10; 19:2; 29:30; 33:18; 35:15.

surely comes to pass."[1] When Ahab and Jehoshaphat desired to know in advance whether or not their campaign against Ramoth Gilead was to be successful, they called together the prophets of Yahweh and inquired of them.[2] It is repeatedly stated of the leaders of Israel that they "enquired of Yahweh" before undertaking some enterprise or making some important decision.[3] There were various ways of doing this, but the prophet's oracle was one of the most important.

The same belief in the prophet as one who was in a certain measure in the confidence of Yahweh is reflected in the word "prophet" itself. This is a Greek word meaning "one who speaks for, or on behalf of another." It never conveys in and of itself the idea of foretelling or prediction. The Hebrew word for "prophet" is accurately translated by the Greek equivalent. The sense of the Hebrew word (*nâvî'*) is clearly brought out in two passages. In Exod. 4:10–16 we find Moses striving to escape the hard task to which Yahweh is calling him. His first excuse is that he is not skilled in public speech, and so is not fitted to be an ambassador to the pharaoh. Yahweh assures him that he will go with him. "I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Moses is still unwilling; so Yahweh relieves him of the responsibility of speech, and tells him that Aaron his brother shall speak for him. The way in which he phrases this assurance is noticeable:

> Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. . . . . And thou shalt speak unto him and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth and teach

[1] I Sam. 9:6. [2] I Kings 22:6 f.

[3] E.g., I Sam. 22:5 ff.; 23:9–12; 30:7 f.; II Sam. 5:23–25; 21:1.

you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be to thee instead of a mouth and thou shalt be to him instead of God.[1]

The same conception of the prophet appears in Exod. 7:1, 2:

And Yahweh said to Moses, "See, I have made thee as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy spokesman [Hebrew *nâvî'*, 'prophet']. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh."

In the light of these and similar statements,[2] it is quite clear that the prophet was looked upon as one who declared the will of Yahweh to the people.

The prophet, however, was not thought of as in a state of continual inspiration. His divine illumination all too often faded into the light of common day. He was thought of rather as one who was susceptible of impressions from the world of the unseen, and so constituted an easy channel of communication between two worlds. The coming of the "divine afflatus" upon the prophet was not subject to his own volition, but when it came he was a helpless victim of its power. The usual phrases indicative of the reception of the prophetic message are: "The hand of Yahweh was upon," or "came upon," or "fell upon," such and such a man;[3] and "the spirit of God came upon," or "rested," or "spake by," or "fell upon," the prophet.[4] The descent of the "hand of Yahweh" or the

[1] Exod. 4:14–16.

[2] Cf. Jer. 1:9; Deut. 18:18.

[3] I Kings 18:46; II Kings 3:15; Ezek. 1:3; 3:14; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1.

[4] Num. 11:25 f., 29; 24:2; I Sam. 10:6, 10; 11:6; 16:13; II Sam. 23:2; II Kings 2:9, 15, 16; Isa. 48:16; 61:1; Joel 2:28 f.; Ezek. 2:2; 11:5; II Chron. 24:20.

"spirit of Yahweh" upon a man or group of men transported them beyond the bounds of normal procedure. They were plunged into an ecstatic state in which they seemed to lose consciousness of the external world. When Saul upon his departure from Samuel met a company of prophets coming down from the high place and prophesying as they came along, he also was seized upon by the spirit of prophecy and was turned into another man, prophesying as the rest of the group were doing.[1] Later, when Saul and David had become estranged, Saul sent messengers to seize David at Naioth in Ramah; but the messengers found Samuel and a band of prophets prophesying around David, and they themselves were seized by the contagion of the prophetic spirit, and they too began to prophesy. This same experience befell two more bands of Saul's messengers. Then Saul went himself in person; but the prophetic frenzy was no respecter of persons, and Saul found himself prophesying like the rest of the company. The description of his conduct on that occasion is significant because it tells not only what Saul did, but shows that his conduct was just like that of all the rest. "And he stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel and lay down naked all that day and all that night."[2] These two cases and the story of the four hundred prophets in the days of Ahab seem to indicate something like mass prophecy in which what we call "mob psychology" played a large part. A similar ecstatic state seems to have overpowered Balaam when he was urged by Balak to curse Israel but could utter nothing but blessings:

[1] I Sam. 10:5–13.

[2] I Sam. 19:19–24.

The spirit of God came upon him. And he took up his parable and said:

> "The saying of Balaam the son of Beor,
> And the saying of the man whose eye is opened;
> The saying of him who hears the words of God,
> Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
> Fallen down, yet with opened eyes. . . . ."[1]

This same ecstatic condition is found elsewhere, as in the case of the unknown prophet of Byblos about 1100 B.C. who intervened in a state of frenzy in behalf of Wen-Amon, the Egyptian envoy to the court of Byblos.[2] The Mohammedan dervishes likewise are at times wrought up to a similar pitch of frenzied ecstasy. That this ecstatic state was characteristic of early prophecy is attested by the fact that the word for "prophesy" is used to describe the conduct of Saul after the "evil spirit from Yahweh" came upon him and transformed him into a lunatic;[3] and by the further fact that the word for "prophesy" and that for "insane," "crazy," run parallel to each other in Jer. 29:26. When one of the sons of the prophets was commissioned by Elisha to go to Ramoth Gilead and anoint Jehu king of Israel, Jehu's captains upon his return to their company wanted to know who the "mad fellow" was who had summoned him from the midst of their council of war.[4] Still further, as in the case of the dervish, so in that of the prophet, this state of prophetic ecstasy could be self-induced. Upon a critical occasion, when Jehoram, of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, of Judah, were in great need of divine help, they applied to Elisha for

[1] Num. 24:2–4.

[2] See my *The Prophet and His Problems* (1914), pp. 12 ff.

[3] I Sam. 18:10.

[4] II Kings 9:11.

his prophetic aid. Elisha protested, but finally yielded to their wish, saying: " 'But now, bring me a minstrel.' And it came to pass that when the minstrel played the hand of Yahweh came upon him [viz., Elisha], and he said, 'Thus says Yahweh.' "[1] That prophecy waited upon music, at least at times, is also seen from the fact that the company of prophets whom Saul met coming down from the high place was equipped with "a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp," to the strains of which they were prophesying.[2]

These early prophets were recognizable not only by their strange conduct, but also by certain external signs. Their manner of life in general was, at least in some cases, patterned after the nomad's way of living. Elijah was a typical nomad, living in seclusion on the margin of the desert and flitting from place to place with uncanny speed.[3] His later reincarnation, John the Baptist, who perhaps modeled his way of living after the traditional conception of Elijah, "had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey."[4] It seems practically certain that the early professional prophets were marked or branded in some way so as to indicate their calling to the eye. In I Kings 20:35–43 one of the "sons of the prophets" is represented as having disguised himself in order to entrap Ahab into self-condemnation. When Ahab had put himself upon record, the prophet removed "the headband away from his eyes, and the king of Israel discerned that he was of the prophets."

[1] II Kings 3:1–19. [2] I Sam. 10:5.

[3] For the standards of life cherished by the nomads, see the story of the Rechabites in Jer. 35:1–11.

[4] Matt. 3:4.

The king did not apparently recognize his person, but only his class. The headband thus would seem to have covered up some brand upon the forehead or some peculiar tonsure that characterized prophets as such. The prevalence of the use of such marks by the prophets is attested by Zech. 13:4–6, where false prophets are charged with wearing "a hairy mantle to deceive" and with branding their hands in some way characteristic of the prophets.

How did these prophets obtain their living? It is quite evident that they expected pay for their services, and were in the habit of receiving it. When Saul's servant proposed that Samuel, the seer, should be consulted with reference to the finding of the lost asses, Saul made objection on the ground that they had nothing with which to reward the seer for his services:

> Saul said to his servant, "But behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What have we?" And the servant answered Saul again and said, "Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of God to tell us our way."

The small amount of the proposed gift[1] is significant of the value placed upon the seer's service. In like manner, when Jeroboam's son fell ill, the king sent his wife to consult Ahijah, the prophet, regarding the outcome of the sickness, and he instructed her to take with her as a gift to the prophet "ten loaves, and biscuits, and a cruse of honey."[2] When the king of Syria wished to know through Elisha how his own sickness was to terminate, he, too,

[1] I Sam. 9:7, 8. A quarter of a shekel was worth about 15 cents; but its purchasing power today is far less than it was in ancient times.

[2] I Kings 14:3.

sent a messenger with a present to the prophet; but it was a present worthy of a king.[1] Elisha steadfastly refused reward when Naaman, the Syrian, wished to show gratitude for his healing from leprosy, though Gehazi, Elisha's servant, was not so self-denying.[2] The general opinion of the times with reference to the prophets' desire for money is vividly illustrated by the story in Amos 7:10–17. When Amos announced the approaching downfall of the house of Jeroboam, the chief priest at Bethel sent word to the king charging Amos with conspiracy against him, and then suggested in insinuating and insulting language that Amos go back home to Judah, where such preaching would be heartily welcomed and be richly rewarded, for disaster threatening Israel would be good news in Judah. This stirred Amos to a denial of any connection between himself and the professional prophets of his day. They might be, and doubtless were, actuated by self-seeking motives, but he was driven to his work by the power of the spirit of Yahweh.

As we look back upon the facts here gathered regarding the prophetic movement in early Israel, we cannot escape the conviction that these forerunners of the great prophets were to a great extent like prophets and seers in non-Hebraic countries.[3] There is the same ecstatic frenzy, the same type of soothsaying, or foretelling, and the same tendency to commercialize their calling. No historical movement, however, is to be judged by its mere beginnings, but rather by its outcome. What did it ultimately contribute to human betterment? Prophecy may safely

[1] II Kings 8:7–9.

[2] II Kings 5:15–27.

[3] See *The Prophet and His Problems* (1914), pp. 3–35.

permit itself to be estimated by the same standard. The prophecy of early Israel met the needs of its day; that age was not yet ready for anything more exalted. This early prophetic movement already revealed some characteristics that were to mark the entire history of prophecy. It represented the conviction that the course of history was in the hand of God, who had a purpose and plan for his people. It believed that this divine plan was from time to time revealed step by step to certain men who were in the confidence of God. It, therefore, sought with all its power to lead the people and the leaders to follow in the path indicated by the prophets. Prophecy's predominant interest from the start was in the progress of the community or nation, rather than in that of the individual. Individuals were of significance only in so far as they vitally affected the life of the people as a whole. It is noteworthy how many times in early Israel prophecy is brought into connection with events and persons of national significance. The first reference to the prophetic movement in its organized form speaks of the company of the prophets as coming down from the "hill of God" where there was "a garrison of the Philistines."[1] It is not, perhaps, assuming too much to suppose that their prophesying at that particular time was closely connected with the presence of the hated invaders. The prophets were keenly interested in the varying fortunes of the early monarchy, and did not shrink from engaging actively in political affairs, helping to make and unmake kings as circumstances required. The names of Deborah, Samuel, Gad, Nathan, Ahijah, Jehu ben Hanani, Elijah, Elisha, and Micaiah ben Imlah, all recall scenes in which national

[1] I Sam. 10:5.

interests were involved, and if these great leaders were engaged in political activities, it is evident that the mass of their prophetic followers would be at least interested in similar matters. In the times of Saul and Ahab, at any rate, the masses of the prophetic movement were involved in the political situation.

There is no sharp break between the early prophets and the great prophets of later times. The transition from early prophecy to later was a process of normal, natural growth. The prophets grew with the nation. As the nation was more and more drawn into the whirl of international politics, the outlook of the prophets widened and their faith deepened; but they retained the fundamental characteristics of prophecy to the very end. It is commonly thought that the later prophets were distinguished from the primitive prophets by the fact that they no longer were subject to ecstatic seizure, and consequently their message was less inspirational and more rational. But more recent studies of the psychology of prophecy are discovering the fact that the ecstatic and mystical element was more or less characteristic of prophecy to the very end.[1] The prophets felt themselves to be in a very real sense partners with Yahweh in his great work, and they expected to hear his voice of inspiration and instruction; and they heard it.

[1] See, e.g., J. Skinner, *Religion and Prophecy* (1922), pp. 3 ff.; H. W. Hines, "The Prophet as Mystic," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, XL (1923), 37–71; T. H. Robinson, *Prophecy and the Prophets* (1923), pp. 147 f.

CHAPTER II

PROPHETIC LEADERS AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

In this chapter, we shall consider the work of four prominent prophets whose activity fell in the years of the united kingdom and in the period of preparation for it. These leaders were individuals who worked in more or less close co-operation with the great company of the sons of the prophets, but by their individual initiative and force took an outstanding position among their fellows, and so left their names permanently impressed upon the memory of their people.

The first of these was a woman, Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth,[1] one of the few women to function as a religious leader in Israel.[2] Her lot was cast in troublous times.[3] The nomadic Hebrews had come in from the des-

[1] Judg. 4:4.

[2] The title "prophetess" is applied elsewhere to the following women only: Miriam (Exod. 15:20), the wife of Isaiah (Isa. 8:3), Huldah (II Kings 22:14), and Noadiah (Neh. 6:14).

[3] The story of her influence is contained in Judges, chaps. 4 and 5. The fifth chapter is generally regarded as one of the earliest documents preserved in the Old Testament. It is a paean of triumph over the defeat of the embattled Canaanites at the hands of the people of Israel. It is great poetry and invaluable for history. The fourth chapter of Judges is a prose narrative, dealing, at least in part, with the same situation as that celebrated in chap. 5. But it is of later origin, and is apparently a composite narrative. The differences between chaps. 4 and 5 are most naturally accounted for on that basis. In chap. 4, the leader of the Canaanites is Jabin, king of Canaan, while Sisera is his commander-in-chief; but in chap. 5 Sisera is evidently presented as king in his own right and Jabin is not mentioned. As a matter of fact, there never was such

ert regions in such numbers and had taken possession of so much Canaanitish territory that they were fast becoming a menace to the Canaanites. The Canaanites were therefore restricting their expansion and pressing them hard, striving to render them impotent. At this juncture Deborah took action. She was evidently a well-known woman. She was in the habit of seating herself beneath a tree and there announcing oracles upon all sorts of questions brought to her for answer.[1] Her ability in such matters had obtained for her great prestige throughout the surrounding country. As she saw the pitiable plight to which her people were being reduced, she resolved to risk all upon a great move. She therefore selected the best available leader, Barak, the son of Abinoam, from Kedesh-Naphtali, and commissioned him in the name of Yahweh to raise a force and strike for freedom. The confidence

unity in Canaan as to make a "king of Canaan" a possibility in pre-Israelite Canaan. In chap. 4 all the tribes around the plain of Esdraelon are represented as engaged in the conflict, while in chap. 5 only Zebulon and Naphtali participate. In chap. 5 Sisera receives his deathblow while awake and standing up, but in chap. 4 he is slain while lying down asleep. According to chap. 5, the battle was fought in the plain of Esdraelon, near Taanach and Megiddo, and on the banks of the river Kishon (Judg. 5:19–21); but chap. 4 places the struggle at the foot of Mount Tabor (Judg. 4:12–14), 15–20 miles farther north and east as the bird flies. From facts such as these it is generally concluded not only that the prose story has received some later editorial touching up, but also that the narrative is the result of the mixture and confusion of two separate accounts. One of these was apparently a record of the battle also recorded in Josh. 11:1–15, where Jabin again appears as the leader of the Canaanites. The other was a later narrative of the struggle recounted in chap. 5. The situation out of which the song of Deborah arose is quite clear. For further discussion of this question see the commentaries on Judges, by George F. Moore (1895), G. A. Cooke (1913), E. L. Curtis (1913), and C. F. Burney (1918).

[1] Judg. 4:4, 5.

placed by Barak in Deborah as the representative and mouthpiece of Yahweh was shared by the people at large, and in the power of the faith in Yahweh which she inspired a decisive defeat was inflicted upon the Canaanites. The fact that the Kishon overflowed its banks at this very time and helped the Israelites rout the foe made the defeat more complete, and gave the Israelites renewed assurance that they were acting in line with the will of Yahweh and that he was co-operating with them.

The contribution of Deborah, the prophetess, was that she saw that it was time to act, that she chose the right leader for the action, and that she stimulated the faith and courage of Israel to the winning-point. She created the morale needed for the situation. That hers was no easy task is quite evident. The song not only sounds the praises of the loyal Israelites who risked their lives and property by joining in the effort for freedom, but it also calls down curses upon those who should have responded to the call for aid but did not. Some of the recalcitrants were in a position to realize the situation vividly and to reap richly of the fruits of the victory; but they were cowards. Reuben, Gilead, Dan, and Asher are chided for their indifference and failure to co-operate, but against Meroz the poet's wrath blazes forth fiercely, for Meroz was right in the heart of the oppressed region and had much to gain; but nothing moved Meroz to action:

> "Curse ye Meroz," said the angel of Yahweh,
> "Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof,
> Because they came not to the help of Yahweh,
> To the help of Yahweh against the mighty."

The struggle represented a movement for political independence, a desire for economic liberty to expand, and

a confidence in Yahweh as willing and able to obtain for his people all that they needed and desired. Deborah stood forth as the embodiment of both patriotism and religion. The victory seems to have dealt the deathblow to the political life of the Canaanites. There were no further attempts to oust Israel.

Conditions in Israel had changed by the time of the appearance of Samuel, the next outstanding figure among the prophets.[1] The rôle of oppressor, relinquished by the Canaanites, was now taken by the Philistines, an Aegean people who had settled on the Maritime Plain and bade fair to overrun all Palestine. Samuel's task was that of inspiring and organizing the Hebrews to undertake the struggle with the Philistines for independence.

The danger from the Canaanites was probably a thing of the past by the time of Samuel's birth. While he was

[1] The account of Samuel's life is given in the first Book of Samuel. It is not, however, a single continuous story. The Books of Samuel are, like the Hexateuch, a composite product. General agreement obtains among scholars upon this proposition; but there is much variation of opinion upon the detailed working out of the process of analysis into the original sources. But again, there is close agreement as to what is early and what is late in the narratives of the life and work of Samuel; and that is all that concerns us here. The early narratives concerning Samuel are quite generally accepted as the following: I Sam. 9:1—10:16; 16:14–23; 25:1. This leaves us with very little historical material of the first order upon which to base an interpretation of Samuel. Under these circumstances we must have recourse to the next layer of materials and select from them what seems most likely to be approximately trustworthy. This later matter includes I Samuel, chaps. 1–3; 7:1–17; 8:1–22; 11:14 f.; chap. 15; 19:18–24. See for a discussion of these questions the commentaries on Samuel, by H. P. Smith (1899), A. R. S. Kennedy (1905); and also J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament* (1922), S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (1914), G. B. Gray, *A Critical Introduction to Old Testament History* (1907), and S. A. Cook, *Critical Notes on Old Testament History* (1913).

growing up, a new foe had appeared upon the scene in the person of the Philistines.[1] They were an aggressive people, and they rapidly made for themselves a large place in Palestine. They were apparently in a fair way to reduce their Israelite neighbors to vassalage. Indeed, we are told in I Sam. 13:19–22 that the Philistine oppression had proceeded so far that the making of agricultural implements and weapons of war had been prohibited by them in Israel, so that the trade of "smith" had fallen into abeyance among the Hebrews. Another narrative, which is probably based upon old records regarding the Ark,[2] tells of two defeats of the Hebrews by the Philistines in the second of which the Ark was captured and carried off into Philistine territory. When pestilence broke out among the Philistines, it was naturally attributed to the anger of the foreign god whose shrine had been thus desecrated; and so the Ark was returned by the Philistines with offerings of propitiation. Amid stirring events like this the young Samuel grew up. These disasters and accompanying acts of oppression constituted the themes of conversation among the groups of patriotic Hebrews surrounding him. Such events fed the fires of his youthful patriotism, and did much to arouse in him the spirit of prophecy.

The fact that Samuel made a deep impression upon his times is shown by the large amount of traditional material that gathered about his name and has been perpetuated unto this day. Samuel, chapters 1–3, seems to be a section from a collection of legendary lives of the prophets, made, perhaps, somewhere about the time of

[1] For a good history of the Philistines, see R. A. Stewart Macalister, *The Philistines—Their History and Civilization* ("Schweich Lectures," 1911). London: Oxford University Press, 1913.

[2] I Sam. 4:1—6:21.

the Deuteronomic reform under King Josiah. Here we are told of the birth of Samuel in answer to the agonizing prayer of Hannah, his mother, and her vow to dedicate her boy, if her prayer is granted, to the service of Yahweh in his temple at Shiloh. Loyal to her vow, she takes the child at the earliest possible moment that he can dispense with his mother's care and leaves him in the sanctuary at Shiloh under the care of Eli, the priest. Her mother-love found touching expression in the making of a little mantle or cloak every year which she took to her child upon the occasion of the annual pilgrimage to the festival at Shiloh. Samuel, meantime, "grew in favour both with Yahweh and also with men." Finally, while still a boy, he received his first message from Yahweh in the form of an announcement of the overthrow of Eli and his house on account of the sins of Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. This wonderful child

. . . . grew and Yahweh was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of Yahweh. And Yahweh appeared again in Shiloh; for Yahweh revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh in the word of Yahweh. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.[1]

Not only so, but chapter 7 goes on to tell of a miraculous overthrow of the Philistines at Mizpeh, as a result of which

. . . . the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the border of Israel, and the hand of Yahweh was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel; and the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel from Ekron even unto Gath; and the borders thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines.[2]

[1] I Sam. 3:19—4:1*a*. [2] I Sam. 7:13–14.

Thus Samuel is made the deliverer of his people once for all from the power of the oppressor.

Much of the foregoing narrative is lacking in historical verisimilitude. At two points, in particular, it is subject to correction on the basis of earlier narratives. Samuel did not expel the Philistines from the territory of Israel, for that great task was left for the young King Saul to enter upon. Indeed, we are told that "there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul";[1] and Saul's last fight with the Philistines brought him defeat and death.[2] Not until the reign of David were the Philistines finally brought to terms.[3] In like manner, the early influence of Samuel is greatly magnified. Instead of "the word of Samuel" coming "to all Israel," he seems to have been known at first throughout only a quite limited area. We read in I Sam. 7:16 f. that Samuel's home was at Ramah and that from there he went out annually on a circuit that included Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, at which points he "judged Israel." These names, with Shiloh added, represent a territory at the most not more than 20 miles from north to south and 2 miles from east to west. Not only so, but when Saul's servant spoke to him of Samuel as a seer who could tell him what had become of the lost asses, Saul apparently was hearing about Samuel for the first time;[4] and that notwithstanding the fact that Saul's home at Gibeah was but a short distance from Samuel's headquarters. This would certainly be inconceivable if Samuel had occupied such a place in the public mind as the later stories assign to him.

[1] I Sam. 14:52.

[2] I Sam. 31:1–6.

[3] II Sam. 8:1; 23:9–17.

[4] I Sam. 9:5 ff., 18 f.

At another point, also, the later records seem to misrepresent Samuel. The desire on the part of Israel for a king is represented as having displeased Samuel to such a degree that Yahweh had to overrule him and order him to comply with the prophet's request.[1] The chapter in which this point of view appears was written by an author who disapproved of the institution of the monarchy and wrote against the background of a long history of the monarchy in Israel. There are three accounts of the anointing of Saul as king. In the first, he is selected by Samuel privately, at the instigation of Yahweh, is anointed secretly, and accepts reluctantly, being distrustful of his prestige and his influence over the people.[2] In the second account, Samuel is represented as having summoned all the tribes of Israel unto Mizpah, where he casts lots until the lot falls upon Saul, who, when found hiding among the baggage, is dragged forth and anointed publicly amid the acclamations of the people.[3] This is quite evidently a part of the later tradition, for it shows Samuel as holding the same attitude of hostility to the monarchy as was seen in I Samuel, chapter 8. In the third record, Saul is seen as a bold patriot who rises to the occasion when a call comes from the men of Jabesh Gilead for help against the Ammonites, who are about to devastate their city. Saul sends out a ringing challenge to the surrounding country that meets with a hearty response, organizes the volunteers into three divisions, falls suddenly upon the Ammonites from three directions, and utterly routs them. In grateful enthusiasm the people hail Saul as king and proceed to Gilgal, where they "made him king before Yahweh," and

[1] I Sam. 8:1–22.

[2] I Sam. 9:1—10:9.

[3] I Sam. 10:17–27.

rejoiced greatly.[1] Samuel appears here after the victory as the one who proposes the public ratification of Saul's kingship.[2] This note is in such close keeping with the point of view in I Sam. 10:25–27 that it is quite generally looked upon as an editorial addition made to bring this narrative of anointing into harmony with the one in I Sam. 10:17–27. In the first and third of these coronation stories the anointing of Saul grows directly out of the disturbed political and military situation, and both of them may be essentially correct. In the first, Samuel fires the young patriot with a holy and patriotic zeal to deliver his people. In the third, the opportunity presents itself to strike a telling blow for liberty and for Yahweh; and Saul rushes to the defense of Jabesh Gilead and thus earns his position as king. The first story in which Samuel anoints Saul in private may possibly be due to the growth of prophetic tradition which claimed for itself all the honor it could. There are elements in the story that look like the work of the later prophetic mind; but, in the absence of positive proof to the contrary, we may well allow Samuel credit for initiating in Saul's mind the dream of freeing his people from their oppressors.

The next occasion upon which we meet Samuel is in connection with the rejection of Saul as king. Of this event there are also two accounts. In Samuel, chapter 13, Saul is repudiated by Samuel for a reason that does not clearly appear. In I Samuel, chapter 15, the rejection is based upon the fact that Saul has not carried out faithfully the command of Yahweh to exterminate the Amalekites. The explanation of the rejection of Saul given in

[1] I Sam. 11:1–11, 15.

[2] I Sam. 11:12–14.

I Sam. 15:7*b*–15*a* is that Saul, after mustering his forces for an attack upon the Philistines, grew impatient over Samuel's failure to keep his appointment, and so proceeded to offer the sacrifices necessary before launching battle against the foe without waiting longer for the delinquent prophet. At this juncture Samuel appeared and proceeded to read Saul out of the kingship. The reason given is that Saul has "not kept the commandment" of Yahweh. If the fact that he had sacrificed with his own hands constituted his offense in the eyes of this narrator, then he must have written very late; for other laymen are represented as offering sacrifice without offense, e.g., David, Solomon, and Elijah. There was no law against the offering of sacrifice by a layman until the adoption of the Deuteronomic Code in the days of King Josiah. Hence these verses in chapter 13 are rightly treated as of late origin by most modern interpreters.[1] The story of the rejection in chapter 15 is to the effect that Samuel communicated to Saul the order of Yahweh that he should destroy Amalek, leaving neither human being nor animal alive, but devoting the whole people and all that they possessed as a *herem* to Yahweh. Saul, however, brought back some of the live stock as spoil and led the captive King Agag in triumph back to Gilgal. There he encountered Samuel, who rebuked him for his disregard of the divine command, saying to him:

> Does Yahweh delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
> As in hearkening to the voice of Yahweh?
> Verily, to hearken is better than sacrifice,
> To give heed than the fat of rams.
> For disobedience is as the sin of divination,

[1] So, e.g., H. P. Smith, Kennedy, Budde, Nowack, and Kittel, *loc. cit.*

> And presumption is as the guilt of the teraphim.
> Because thou hast rejected the word of Yahweh,
> He has rejected thee from being king over Israel.[1]

Thereupon Samuel "hewed Agag in pieces before Yahweh in Gilgal." The point of view and spirit of this narrative are primitive enough, surely, to warrant relatively early origin. There is every reason to suppose that here we are in touch with reality, that a vivid picture of the thought and feeling of Samuel's day is flashed before us. It seems altogether reasonable to accept the attack upon Amalek and the disagreement between Samuel and Saul as to the treatment of the spoil and the captive king as actual historical facts. This account, in any case, attests the fact that Saul lost the powerful support of Samuel, who absented himself from the court of Saul for the rest of his days.

In I Sam. 16:1–13, Samuel is represented as going to the home of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, and there anointing David, one of Jesse's sons, as king of Israel in place of Saul. Scholars in general rightly regard this section as of later origin.[2] It grew out of the later feeling with reference to David. David must be Yahweh's anointed, and Samuel of all men must anoint him. The only other contact of Samuel with David is related in I Sam. 19:18–24, but this, too, is a product of the later prophetic tradition.[3] Samuel's farewell speech[4] upon the anointing of Saul is also to be assigned to a later homilizing spirit. The attitude of hostility toward the monarchy in itself is here

[1] I Sam. 15:22, 23.

[2] See Budde, H. P. Smith, Kennedy, Kittel, Dhorme, Cornill, and Nowack, *loc. cit.*

[3] See Commentaries, *ad loc.* [4] I Samuel, chap. 12.

again attributed to Samuel without due warrant. But the challenge that Samuel is made to throw out to his people, to the effect that he defies anyone to accuse him of what we today call "grafting," is doubtless grounded upon a sound tradition. Samuel was too true a patriot to have sought to enrich himself at the expense of his fellow-citizens.

The great merit of Samuel was that he saw the need of his times, found the man capable of meeting that need, and inspired in him the courage and faith necessary for the successful accomplishment of his task. The importance of his contribution to the history of Israel is shown by the large amount of tradition that gathered about his name. It is impossible with any appreciable degree of accuracy to sift the legendary from the historically valid in the mass of later tradition; but it is clear that Samuel did so great a work in his own day that the memory of it grew with succeeding generations. The two characteristics that may safely be predicated of him are his vital faith in his people's God and his keen political insight. These two qualities combined to make him a leader and a prophet.

The prophet Gad was a contemporary and an adviser of David, both before and after he became king. His name appears only twice in the Books of Samuel. The first reference to him represents him as urging David to stay no longer in Mizpah in the land of Moab,[1] whither he had fled to escape the wrath of Saul, but to return to the land of Judah.[2] This shows that Gad had cast in his lot with David and against Saul; and that he was therefore a faith-

[1] Reading with the Syriac text "Mizpah" instead of "the hold" as in Hebrew; see *ibid.*, *in loc.*

[2] I Sam. 22:5.

ful supporter not driven away by the hard lot of David during the last years of King Saul. The second appearance of Gad is after David had taken the census of all Israel. Now he comes forward as a spokesman of Yahweh's wrath against the king.[1] The narrative in which Gad figures is quite naïve in its thought of Yahweh. Yahweh is said to have been angered against Israel (though no occasion is cited for his wrath), so he stirred up David to take a census of his people. This David arranged to carry out, though the wise Joab and his subordinate officers counseled him against what was evidently thought of as an impious procedure. No sooner was the census complete than David's conscience smote him for his wickedness. Just at this juncture the prophet Gad, David's seer, felt himself inspired to speak to David in the name of Yahweh, offering him a choice of seven years of famine, or three months of defeat and pursuit at the hands of his enemies, or three days of pestilence. David selects the pestilence, which forthwith falls upon the people, carrying off seventy thousand men. David saw the angel of Yahweh that had charge of the work of destruction and besought him for mercy upon Israel. Thereupon Gad again appeared in David's presence and instructed him to build an altar to Yahweh on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, where he had seen the angel. Upon David's doing so and offering upon his altar burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, "Yahweh was entreated for the land and the plague was stayed from upon Israel."

This narrative is placed at a late date by most interpreters.[2] But there are elements in it that prevent us from

[1] II Sam. 24:11–14.

[2] So, e.g., H. P. Smith, Kennedy, Budde, and Nowack, *loc. cit.*

putting it too late. The conception of Yahweh here is quite unmoralized. He inspires David to undertake an enterprise,[1] and then punishes him through his people for undertaking it. But the conception of prophecy is relatively early. Gad is not afraid of the king; he dares to appear in opposition to his course of action and to serve as the mouthpiece of Yahweh's wrath. But he utters no protest against the punishment of the people for the offense of their king, and he bids the king seek forgiveness through ritualistic measures. In both of these respects Gad is far behind the standpoint of the great prophets of the eighth century B.C. His criticism of the king, however, like that of Samuel, prepared the way for the liberty accorded his greater successors.

The last prophet of the Davidic age was Nathan. Unfortunately, little of the material concerning him can successfully claim an early origin. The story in II Sam. 7:1–17 of Nathan's counsel to David, given as the word of Yahweh, that he should not proceed to the erection of a temple to Yahweh, but should leave that task for his son, is quite generally assigned to the seventh century B.C. or even later.[2] This means that it has practically no historical validity for the times and events of which it purports to tell. A similar judgment is generally passed upon the parable of the ewe-lamb which Nathan is said to have related to David after his sin with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah.[3] All that is left of the narrative regarding Nathan that may be safely ranked as early is the

[1] Cf. the changed point of view in I Chron. 21:1.

[2] So, e.g., Kennedy, H. P. Smith, Budde, Kittel, Nowack, and Cornill.

[3] II Sam. 12:1–14. So, e.g., H. P. Smith, Budde, and Nowack; but Kennedy argues for an earlier date.

statement in II Sam. 12:25 that he was responsible for giving Solomon the name Jedidiah, meaning "beloved of Yahweh"; and the account in I Kings, chapter 1, of the proceedings connected with the accession of Solomon.

The narrative of Solomon's acquisition of the throne of Israel is vivid and natural, bearing the marks of its writer's close familiarity with the actual course of events. When David was near his end, Adonijah, his eldest son, took steps to assure himself of the possession of his father's throne by getting himself anointed and acclaimed king by a powerful group even while David was yet alive. But he reckoned without his host. Nathan, the prophet, learned of what was going on and hastened to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, and urged her to seek an interview with David and to remind him of his pledge to her that Solomon should succeed him upon the throne. Bathsheba carried out her instructions and told her story to David as directed. She was scarcely through when Nathan was announced. He took up the story of what Adonijah had done, reminded the king of his promise to Solomon's mother, and gently challenged the king to make good. The spirit of the dying king responded to this appeal with something of its old fire, and orders were given for the anointing of Solomon by Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet. The result was that the movement of Adonijah collapsed and Solomon was firmly established on the throne. This story shows that Nathan had long had influence with David and that he had made common cause with Bathsheba and Solomon to the end that Solomon should reign in his father's stead.

The story speaks eloquently of the place that Nathan held in David's court. He had evidently been in the close

confidence of the king for years. He was familiar with all the intrigues that were going on as the old king's strength failed. He himself knew the tricks of the politician's trade, and he did not hesitate to bring to bear upon David's mind and heart all the influence at his control. Solomon was quite evidently not the choice of all the people; Adonijah had a strong following; but the prestige of David's will and the influence of the aged prophet and the priest of the royal shrine were too much for Adonijah to overcome. Whether there were any strong or adequate moral or religious motives operative in Nathan's mind in these maneuvers we have no means of knowing. But the presumption is that Nathan was dominated by genuinely prophetic motives, which were not only political or patriotic, but also profoundly religious.

CHAPTER III

PROPHECY AND THE SYRIAN WARS

The newly born kingdom of Saul grew to manhood under King David, expanded to its full development under Solomon, and suffered disintegration under Rehoboam. The reign of Solomon swept Israel out into the stream of world-politics. Solomon's many foreign brides were the pledges of good faith in as many treaties. Solomon also encouraged foreign commerce, starting a sea trade on the Red Sea from a port in Edom to the land of Ophir,[1] in ships manned by Phoenician sailors, and building another "navy of Tarshish"[2] which made the round trip in a period of three years. Not only did he trade by sea, but he also seems to have served as a royal horse-merchant, serving as trader in horses between Egypt and the northern kingdoms. He was also a great builder, being credited with the erection of the Temple and of the even greater palace,[3] and in the rebuilding and fortification of Gezer, Bethhoron the Lower, Hazor, Megiddo, and the wall of Jerusalem.[4] All this activity and expenditure made necessary a heavy tax upon all the people and a large amount of forced labor.[5] In all this Solomon was following the

[1] I Kings 9:26; 10:11.

[2] I Kings 10:22.

[3] I Kings 6:38; 7:1.

[4] I Kings 9:15 ff.

[5] I Kings 5:13–18; 9:15–23; 11:26 ff. The Lucianic text of the Septuagint adds materials here that are not in the Hebrew text. The flight of Jeroboam in the latter is placed immediately after his interview with Ahijah, the implication being that Solomon had heard of this meeting and had sought to arrest Jeroboam. Nothing is said of any overt move-

example of the great kings of the Orient and especially the pharaohs of Egypt.

Taxation is never popular, and forced labor is always resented. It is only what might be expected, therefore, when we find that rebellion broke out in Solomon's own day. The leader of the movement was Jeroboam, one of Solomon's overseers of his levy or *corvée*. The rebellion was unsuccessful and Jeroboam had to flee to Egypt until the death of Solomon.[1]

Either before his flight to Egypt, or soon after his return, Jeroboam encountered the prophet Ahijah, of Shiloh. Ahijah had put on a new cloak for the occasion. This he stripped off and rent into fragments, handing ten of them to Jeroboam, saying: "Take thee ten pieces: for thus says Yahweh the God of Israel, 'Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee.' "[2] There is no adequate reason for doubting the participation of the prophets in the revolt of Jeroboam. They were always vitally interested in the welfare of their people and the conduct of their kings. It is almost inconceivable that a great movement like this should

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ment toward the revolt at this time. The Lucianic account comes directly after 12:24 and makes Jeroboam to have organized a rebellion, at the head of a force of three hundred chariots. When Solomon sought to kill him he took refuge in Egypt, whence he returned after the death of Solomon to organize revolt against Rehoboam. In the midst of these activities he is met by a prophet, named Shemaiah, who prophesies the disruption and promises Jeroboam the kingship of the ten tribes. For a critical attack upon the value of the Lucianic text, see Ed. Meyer, *Die Israeliten und ihrer Nachbarstämme* (1906), pp. 363–70; and B. Stade and F. Schwally, *The Books of Kings* ("Sacred Books of the Old Testament," 1904), p. 130. For a critical defense, see A. T. Olmstead, *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, XXX (1913), 15 ff.

[1] See previous footnote. [2] I Kings 11:29–32.

have taken place in Israel and the prophets have kept silence throughout its progress. This was precisely the sort of thing most likely to arouse them to frenzy. As Samuel was behind Saul and David, and as Nathan supported Solomon, so in all probability prophecy in the person of Ahijah cast in its lot with Jeroboam. It is hardly likely that in that day an aspirant for the throne would have proceeded far without the support of some recognized representative of Yahweh. The prophets would almost inevitably be in opposition to the continuation of Solomon's general policy. They were enthusiastic supporters of the ideals of the nomadic life, and looked with hostility upon the increasing luxury and effeminacy of the civilized life in Canaan. They would certainly be outraged by the presence of the shrines for foreign gods in Jerusalem which Solomon had provided for his imported wives. It is not at all likely that Ahijah's support of Jeroboam was an invention of later prophetic writers, when we recall that these later prophets denounced the disruption as directly contrary to the will of Yahweh.[1] We therefore are fairly safe in accepting this record of Ahijah's participation in the revolt as essentially correct.[2] Ahijah appears in action again only in I Kings 14:1 ff. where he predicts the death of Jeroboam's boy. This may possibly be symptomatic of a later breach between Jeroboam and Ahijah, but here conjecture only is possible.[3]

[1] See Hos. 8:4; 13:11; I Kings, chap. 13, and 14:1–18.

[2] But see per contra, H. P. Smith, *Old Testament History* (1903), pp. 177 ff., where no allusion is made to Ahijah; similar silence is observed by B. Stade, *Geschichte* (1887), pp. 344 ff.

[3] The narratives concerning Ahijah have been greatly expanded by later Deuteronomic editors. The oldest materials are confined to I Kings 11:26–32*a*, and 14:1–6, 17 f.

The next prophetic name appears in the reign of Baasha and is that of Jehu, son of Hanani.[1] The narrative regarding him is late; and all that can safely be inferred from the story is the name of the prophet and perhaps the fact that he was a hostile critic of King Baasha. The outstanding fact in Baasha's reign is that his attacks upon Judah led Asa, king of Judah, to hire the aid of Benhadad, king of Syria; and so Syria began the series of attacks upon Israel which opened the long-drawn-out struggle between Syria and Israel.

Our next known prophets are found in the reign of Ahab, in the first half of the ninth century B.C. Ahab's father, Omri, had begun to make a large place for Israel among the small kings of Western Asia. It is significant that the Assyrian inscriptions spoke of Israel as "the land of Omri" long after Omri's death.[2] Omri left a strong kingdom to his son, and Ahab proceeded to make it stronger and richer. He made an alliance with Phoenicia by marrying Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal king of Sidon; and Judah also was in alliance with him either voluntarily or as a vassal.[3] His relations with Syria seem to have varied greatly. At times peace prevailed between the two peoples, at other times they were fighting fiercely against each other, and at still other times they are found fighting as allies against a common foe.

It is fairly safe to say that the outstanding interest of Ahab was in the foreign relations of his kingdom. His alliances with Syria, Phoenicia, and Judah and his frequent wars make that clear. The great antagonist during

[1] I Kings 16:1–7.

[2] Adad-nirari III (811–782 B.C.) and Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.) both speak of Israel by that name.

[3] I Kings 22:2 ff.

most of his reign was Syria. He inherited war with Syria from his father, and the alliances with Phoenicia and Judah were probably aimed directly at her. The Old Testament record of the Syrian wars is almost certainly incomplete. The insolent message of Benhadad in I Kings 20:3 f. presupposes the subservience of Israel, which certainly could not have been counted upon nor acknowledged unless previous events had put Israel in the power of Syria. Two battles are recorded in I Kings, chapter 20, between Ahab and Benhadad, both of which resulted in Benhadad's defeat. After the second defeat a treaty of peace was made between them, by the terms of which Benhadad restored to Ahab certain cities which Omri had been compelled to hand over to Syria, and also gave Israel the right to certain trading privileges in Damascus.[1] These battles may perhaps be put fairly early in the reign of Ahab, though we have only the name of the Syrian king to guide us as to the date.[2]

However, in 853 B.C.[3] a new and greater enemy appeared in Western Asia, viz., Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria. The Old Testament record is silent about him and his doings. But he must have filled the minds of the kings of the Mediterranean coast-lands of Western Asia to the exclusion of all lesser interests. Our knowledge of him is obtained from his own inscriptions. In his great Monolith Inscription, he records a battle against twelve kings at Ḳarkar, and among the twelve he lists Ahab, of Israel. The narrative runs as follows:

1 departed from Argana and advanced to Ḳarḳar. Ḳarḳar, his

[1] I Kings 20:34.

[2] See D. D. Luckenbill, "Benhadad and Hadadezer," *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, XXVII (1910), 267–84.

[3] For the chronology of this period see Emil Forrer, *Mitteilungen Der Vorderasiatichen-Gesellschaft*, Vol. XX, No. 3 (Leipzig, 1916).

royal city, I destroyed, devastated, and burned with fire. Twelve hundred chariots, twelve hundred riding-horses, and twenty thousand soldiers of Hadad-Ezer of Damascus; seven hundred chariots, seven hundred riding-horses, and ten thousand soldiers of Irhuleni of Hamath; two thousand chariots and ten thousand soldiers of Ahab of Israel; five hundred soldiers of the Quaeans, one thousand soldiers of the Muṣrians, ten chariots and ten thousand soldiers of the Irqanateans; two hundred soldiers of Matinu-bale of Arvad; two hundred soldiers of the Usanatians; thirty chariots and ten thousand soldiers of Aduni-balu of the Shianians; one thousand camels of Gindubu the Arabian . . . . ten thousand soldiers of Basa, son of Ruhubi, the Ammonite: these twelve kings came to his aid. To make war and battle they came against me. With the splendid forces which Ashur, the lord, had given; with the powerful weapons which Nergal who goes before me had presented, I fought with them. From Ḳarḳar to Gilzan I accomplished their overthrow. Fourteen thousand soldiers, their fighting men I brought low with my weapons.[1]

The victory of which Shalmaneser lays claim was evidently a very dubious one; for he returned to Assyria at once and did not follow up his success as a normal victor would have done. Not only so, but he found it necessary to confront this same coalition of kings again in 850, 849, and 845 B.C. The peoples of the Western coast-lands were fighting for their very existence and fighting what was inevitably a losing battle in the outcome. Ahab's name does not appear among the combatants after 854 B.C. His death probably occurred before the campaign of 850 B.C.

In addition to these great struggles, Ahab fought also against Mesha, king of Moab. Omri had made Moab subject to Israel; but in the middle of Ahab's reign, Mesha led a successful revolt, and Moab broke away from Israel.

[1] The entire inscription will be found in R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament* (1913); R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (1901).

This conflict is recorded on Mesha's Inscription, commonly known as the Moabite Stone.[1] This revolt is either a different one from that recorded in II Kings 3:4 ff., or else the latter passage has dated it incorrectly, which is probably the case. The last conflict in which Ahab fought was the attack upon Ramoth Gilead in which he lost his life.[2] Here he was fighting against Hadadezer, of Syria, with whom in 853 B.C. he had been allied against Assyria.

Looking back upon the record of the score of years, during which Ahab led Israel, it is obvious that he was an active, courageous, forceful, and statesman-like king. Our oldest narratives reflect a clear recognition of those qualities. He fought hard to gain his independence from Syria, and he cultivated the friendship of his neighbors from the point of view of strengthening Israel for this task. But when the greater danger of an Assyrian conquest loomed up, he put aside his own plans for a while and threw himself heartily and effectively into the effort to drive back Shalmaneser. It is clear from the record that next to Hadadezer himself, Ahab was the most powerful of the allied kings. This joint undertaking of the allies was by all odds the most important interest in each of the lands involved. It was doubtless from a regard for the interests of this movement that Ahab dealt so generously with Benhadad after defeating him at the battle of Aphek. Ahab was engaged in a series of great struggles that must have occupied all his thought and energy and have strained the resources of his kingdom to the utmost. The very existence of the kingdom was at stake.

[1] I Kings, chap. 22.

[2] See S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel* (2d ed., 1913), pp. lxxxiv–xciv, and W. H. Bennett, *The Moabite Stone* (1911); George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* (1916), pp. 368 ff.

The prophets of the period were, of course, deeply interested in the course of events. Patriotism and religion were always closely allied. It is natural, therefore, that prophets are reported to have given the king the benefit of their counsel in connection with his battles against Benhadad.[1] But the broad outlook of Ahab was not shared by all the prophets, and one of them did not hesitate to denounce him after the battle of Aphek for having spared Benhadad when he had had him in his power.[2] Again, when Ahab was organizing his final campaign against Ramoth Gilead, there was a difference of opinion among the prophets. Four hundred of them *en masse* urged Ahab on to the fray, assuring him that Yahweh would lead him on to victory.[3] But Micaiah ben Imlah was of the contrary opinion. It seems that this prophet had established a reputation for hostility to the royal policy prior to this occasion;[4] and, as Ahab had expected, he threw cold water upon the enterprise and foretold the death of Ahab himself.[5] But the most interesting thing is Micaiah's attitude toward the other four hundred prophets. He does not shrink from saying to the king that these prophetic advisers of his have been inspired by Yahweh to tell him a lie.[6] Inspired liars! What a strange collocation of terms! Incidentally, this representation shows what a low moral standard prevailed in Israel when this kind of procedure could be predicated of Yahweh. But, on the other hand, Micaiah shows some power of discernment here in that he recognizes that these prophets are quite honest and sincere in their counsel. They are proph-

[1] I Kings 20:22, 28.
[2] I Kings 20:35–43.
[3] I Kings 22:5, 6.
[4] I Kings 22:8.
[5] I Kings 22:17, 18, 28.
[6] I Kings 22:19–23.

esying out of their own inmost convictions, believing that it is the will of Yahweh to give victory to his people. If this diagnosis of their opinion was correct, then, strictly speaking, they could not rightly be accused as false prophets; they were not deliberately misleading Ahab; they were giving him the best judgment of which they were capable; indeed, they were speaking to him the word of God! If Micaiah was correct, the deceiver here was Yahweh himself, not the prophetic group. Trying to see things as they were, we may perhaps say that it was a case of two different types of patriots. The four hundred prophets were small-minded, narrowly patriotic people who saw nothing but the fact that Ramoth Gilead, an Israelitish town, was in the hands of the Syrians; and they thought that this was a good opportunity to recover what belonged to them. Micaiah, however, perhaps realized that this war of aggression on the part of Israel was a foolish thing, coming at a time when it was necessary that preparations should be going on for another joint defense against the rapacious Assyrians. It certainly was no time for the Syrian states to be engaging in internecine strife and expending the human and material resources that were to be so much needed against the Assyrian in the immediate future.

The outstanding prophets of Ahab's reign and the immediately following period, according to the records in the Books of Kings, were Elijah and Elisha. These two men receive an extraordinary amount of attention, and are credited with extraordinary deeds. But when the narratives regarding them are seen in the cold light of criticism, grave doubt as to their historicity arises. It appears at once that Elijah and Elisha are both credited

with deeds that are strangely alike. Both bring to life again a dead child who was the only son of his mother.[1] Both fill the failing oil cruse of a widow.[2] Both at the time of their death are described as "the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof."[3] Both are given credit for the anointing of Jehu and Hazael of Syria.[4] And both alike are made responsible for the extermination of Baalism—Elijah through the slaughter on Mount Carmel and Elisha through the bloody work of Jehu.

Not only so, but the narratives are full of legendary and folklore elements, so that they make the impression of sagas rather than of historical narratives. Elisha makes iron to swim.[5] Ahab sends an embassy to "all the nations," and puts them under oath that Elijah is not in hiding in their dominions. No king in the ancient world was in a position to do such a thing, let alone the king of such a small people as Israel. Elijah is fed by ravens at the brook Cherith,[6] just as Semiramis—according to a legend of Askelon—was exposed as a child in the desert and fed by doves with curdled milk, and as Romulus and Remus of ancient Rome were fed by wolves. Elijah traveled for forty days and forty nights to Mount Horeb without food, and saw and heard wonders upon his arrival.[7] Incidentally, we wonder why he was so long upon the journey—Horeb was but eleven days' journey from Kadesh.[8] Elisha calls down a curse upon the heads of little children who make fun of his bald head, and straightway she-bears come out of the woods and tear and rend forty

[1] I Kings 17:17 ff.; II Kings 4:17 ff.
[2] I Kings 17:14–16; II Kings 4:1 ff.
[3] II Kings 2:12; 13:14.
[4] I Kings 19:15 f.; II Kings 8:13; 9–1:10.
[5] II Kings 6:1–7.
[6] I Kings 17:1–6.
[7] I Kings 19:1–18.
[8] Deut. 1:2.

of them.[1] Elijah calls down fire from the heavens upon the heads of two successive companies of soldiers sent to seize him and they are consumed.[2] Elijah is able to get an abundance of water upon the top of Mount Carmel in a time of severe and long-continued drought.[3] Elijah finds a glorious ending by being translated to the celestial regions in a chariot of fire.[4] And Elisha's dead body has such miraculous potency that, when another dead man was put into Elisha's tomb, the newcomer at once sprang to his feet.[5] There is a far greater proportion of this kind of material in the Elijah-Elisha stories than is found anywhere else in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament.

Narratives of this kind may quite easily have sprung into being very soon after the times of Elijah and Elisha. No great lapse of time is needed for the origin of such tales. It was a credulous and superstitious age. Stories of the marvelous would find ready credence. We need only observe similar phenomena in recent times to realize this. The doings and sayings of Washington and Lincoln have been enlarged upon and glorified in most unhistorical fashion.[6] In our own day, we have only to think of the stories current in England in the autumn of 1914 to the effect that Russian troops had been sent on their way through England to take their place beside the Allies upon the Western front, though not a single Russian regiment ever set foot upon English soil. A still closer parallel to our

[1] II Kings 2:23–25. [3] I Kings 18:19 ff., 33–35.

[2] II Kings 1:9 ff. [4] II Kings 2:1–12. [5] II Kings 13:21.

[6] See S. G. Fisher, "The Legendary and Myth-making Processes in Histories of the American Revolution," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, LI (1912), 53–76; C. A. Manning, "Yermak Timofeyevitch in Russian Folk Poetry," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, XLIII, 206–15.

stories is the tale of the angelic bowmen who intervened between the retreating English and the attacking Germans at Mons in 1914. Though that tale has been traced to its creator, who has declared it to be a work of his literary imagination,[1] it was believed by multitudes and still finds its defenders. But the fact that the Elijah and Elisha narratives may have arisen at a relatively early date does not give them the right to be accepted at their face value. Not their age but their character is against them. They are largely the product of the luxuriant and uncritical imagination of their times.

The stories make Ahab out to have been a persecutor of the prophets of Yahweh and his worshipers. But Ahab's children carried names compounded with the name Yahweh, viz., Joram, Ahaziah, Joash, and Athaliah. These were Jezebel's children, too! Children named after Yahweh are the most convincing evidence that Ahab honored Yahweh as his god. Not only so, but there were flourishing prophetical groups in Bethel and Jericho in Ahab's day and after his death.[2] When Ahab started out upon his final campaign he was able to summon four hundred prophets of Yahweh to give him counsel.[3] Micaiah ben Imlah was known to be hostile to Ahab; yet Ahab did not kill him, but called him into consultation. On the other hand, the worshipers of Baal could all be assembled in a single temple in Samaria shortly after Ahab's death.[4] Ahab's hostility toward Yahweh, therefore, would seem to have been a non-existent thing, and his zeal for the Baalim to have been greatly magnified

[1] Arthur Machen, *The Bowmen and Other Legends of the War.* (London: 1915).

[2] II Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15. [3] I Kings 22:6. [4] II Kings 10:18 ff.

Yet if these narratives come from a period fairly close to the times that they purport to describe, there must be some elements of truth and reality in what they report. Ithobaal, father of Jezebel, really was priest-king of Sidon in the ninth century B.C. There actually was a famine lasting for a year or more in Phoenicia in the reign of Ithobaal, according to Menander of Ephesus.[1] The gathering of the prophets and priests of Baal on Mount Carmel in a time of drought for the purpose of making intercession to the Baal for relief from the drought and famine is quite in keeping with ancient practice. The hatred of Elijah against the Baalim rings true to prophetic form, and probably rests upon a basis of fact. The nomadic and somewhat ecstatic character of Elijah is likewise to be credited to a sound tradition.

Elijah's opposition to Ahab as presented in the traditions centered around two things, viz., Ahab's attitude toward the Baalim and his seizure of Naboth's vineyard. It was a case of the practical statesman confronted by an out-and-out idealist and religious enthusiast. Ahab, whose policy of alliance with his neighbors was doubtless well thought out and had large ends in view, could not respond to the prophet's desires and initiate a persecution looking toward the extermination of Baalim from Israel, without breaking off his alliance with Phoenicia, at least, and perhaps also with other Canaanitish and Syrian powers. But these alliances were vital to the success of the larger aims that Ahab had in mind, and were not to be lightly broken upon the word of a mere long-haired "prophet" from the desert. It may be that Ahab's support of Baalism went no farther than an amiable tolerance and a pro-

[1] See Josephus *Contra Apion* i. 18, and *Archaeology* viii. 13. 2.

vision for the religious needs of his Phoenician wife. But this was too much for the enthusiast and idealist who would have had Ahab forego everything in the world but his undiluted loyalty to his own people and to Yahweh the God of Israel. Prophecy was a conservative force in Israel, standing for loyalty to the ideals of the nomadic life of days gone by, hostile to the advance of civilization and culture, and intolerant of the worship in Israel of any other god but Yahweh.[1] Elijah was a typical embodiment of this conservatism.

The Naboth episode is made responsible by tradition for the fall of Ahab's dynasty.[2] This crime may with reasonable safety be charged up against Ahab and Jezebel. It was the type of action all too common with oriental despots. Ahab was unduly influenced by his Phoenician wife so that he permitted her the use of power which she did not fail to use to the utmost. If the course of events is faithfully depicted in the narrative, it is not at all unlikely that Ahab knew nothing of the scheme of Jezebel until it was accomplished and he was in enjoyment of the ill-gotten spoil. In any case there was here a conflict between two opposing types of government, that of the typical autocrat over against that of the sturdy democrat. Naboth was but standing up for the maintenance of his long-recognized family rights, while Ahab through Jezebel cast rights to the winds and so acted as to obtain his wish without scruple. There is no reason to suppose that the principle at stake was not an old one; and that Elijah stood upon this occasion for the recognition by the kings

[1] See J. M. Powis Smith, "The Conservatism of Early Prophecy," *American Journal of Theology*, XXIII, 290–99.

[2] I Kings 21:19; II Kings 9:36 f.

of the fundamental rights of his subjects is altogether probable. This was in close harmony with the spirit and attitude of prophecy from the start.

Elijah's personality and work clearly left a deep impression upon the consciousness of his generation. The degree to which his life has been idealized and glorified in the traditions is of itself a testimony to the importance of his contribution to his times. We may not be able to follow the tradition in its enthusiastic glorification of Elijah and accredit to him all the wonders of these legends; but we must recognize that he was an outstanding figure in his day, that he did not shrink from antagonizing the mighty king, Ahab, and that while he may not have been alert to the dangers of the international situation, he was keenly alive to the necessity of justice to the common man and of unswerving loyalty to Yahweh as the God of the nomadic fathers, who required of their sons the same simplicity of life and sincerity of worship that had characterized the pioneers.

In so far as he is not a pale reflection of Elijah, Elisha appears as a strong supporter of Israel in its war with Syria. His contribution to the struggle by way of advice and stimulation of faith in Yahweh did much to keep up the morale of the king and his people. He differed apparently from Elijah, not only in his manner of life, but also in his attitude toward the movements of his day. Elijah was essentially conservative and almost reactionary in principle; Elisha was sympathetic toward the progress of his day and helpful in the solution of practical problems. He died a loyal patriot, in his last hours giving encouragement and stimulus to the king for the struggle against Syria.

CHAPTER IV

AMOS AND HOSEA

The disaster that befell Israel and Ahab at Ramoth Gilead was but the beginning of a long period of depression. In the days of Jehu, Damascus seems to have had its own way with Israel. "In those days Yahweh began to cut Israel short; from Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan."[1] Not only so, but the armies of Assyria were frequent visitors in the Westland. In 849, 846, and again in 842 B.C. Shalmaneser III invaded this region and fought with its allied forces. Indeed, in 842 B.C. Jehu was forced to pay tribute to Shalmaneser, as we learn from Shalmaneser's Obelisk Inscription, where he pictures Hebrews kneeling before him and says: "I have received the tribute of Jehu, son of Omri: silver, gold, golden bowls, golden chalices, golden cups, golden buckets, lead, a sceptre for the hands of the king and balsam-woods."[2] In 839 B.C. Shalmaneser again attacked Damascus and defeated Hazael, receiving tribute also from Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos.

The depths to which Israel had sunk in the days of Jehoahaz are reflected in this Hebrew statement regarding the king of Syria: "Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten

[1] II Kings 10:32 f.

[2] R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament* (1912), p. 304.

thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them and had made them like the dust by threshing."[1] But finally: "Yahweh gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians."[2] This "saviour" was none other than the Assyrian king. Adad-nirari IV (810–782 B.C.) of Assyria was an energetic sovereign. He declares in one of his inscriptions:

> From the shore of the Euphrates out, I subdued the land of the Hittites, the whole of Amurru, Tyre, Sidon, the land of Omri, Edom and Philistia as far as the great western sea. Taxes and tribute I laid upon them. To the land of Damascus I drew nigh. I shut up Mari, king of Damascus, in Damascus, his residential city. Fear before the splendor of Asshur, his lord, overcame him; *he seized my feet and became subject to me.*[3]

That meant the end to all trouble for Israel from Syria; and for the next half-century Assyria was quiescent in the Westland. It was a period of weakness and internal strife in Assyria herself, and consequently, as she was unable to push her conquests, the Westland was left undisturbed. Joash, of Israel, and Jeroboam II utilized this opportunity to recover Israel's lost territory. The result was that by the latter part of Jeroboam's reign Israel was in a highly prosperous and supremely confident condition. The Kings-narrative thus describes and explains the good fortune of Israel:

> He restored the border of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of Yahweh, God of Israel, which he spoke through his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher. For Yahweh saw the affliction of Israel that it was very severe; for there was not

[1] II Kings 13:7. [2] II Kings 13:5.

[3] Nimrud Inscription; see R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (1901), pp. 51 f.

any restrained nor any released, nor any help for Israel. But Yahweh had not said that he would blot out the name of Israel from under the heavens; so he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam, the son of Joash.[1]

Jeroboam is here evidently thought of as the "saviour" mentioned in II Kings 13:5; but Jeroboam could have done little had it not been for Adad-nirari, who cleared Syria out of his way.

Into the midst of this blazing sunshine of prosperity came Amos, of Tekoa, thundering forth denunciation and disaster.[2] Amos was a shepherd[3] who watched his flocks as they grazed on the sunny slopes of the hills, 10 miles or so to the south of Jerusalem. Quite likely he spent many days in the sight of the Dead Sea with all its waste and desolation, so suggestive and burdened with so terrible a tradition from the distant past. He also describes himself as a dresser of sycamore trees.[4] The sycamore does not grow at an elevation of more than 1,000 feet; and since Tekoa is almost 3,000 feet above sea-level, Amos must have owned or worked in some fields located at a considerable distance from Tekoa. But his occupations afforded him much time and food for thought. As an owner of sheep, he had occasion from time to time to visit the great markets of Judah and Israel in order to sell the products of his flock. From such excursions into the great commercial centers, he returned to the solitudes of his mountain home, his mind filled with new and strange

[1] II Kings 14:25–27.

[2] The appearance of Amos as a prophet may be placed about 750 B.C. For a full discussion of the date, see W. R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea* ("International Critical Commentary," 1905), pp. cii–civ.

[3] Amos 1:1; 7:14 f.

[4] Amos 7:14.

sights and his heart burdened with a heavy load of grief over what he saw.

It is significant that Amos refused to allow himself to be called a "prophet." He clearly realized that the "prophets" of his day were in bad repute, and that he must separate himself sharply from them if he would not be misunderstood. The nature of the misunderstanding is quite clear from the slur of Amaziah, the chief priest at Bethel, when he urged Amos to return home, saying:

> O seer! Go away; flee to the land of Judah;
> And eat bread there, and there prophesy!
> But at Bethel do not prophesy again;
> For the king's sanctuary, and the royal palace are here![1]

The implication of this was that Amos was like the rest of the prophets of the day who were prophets for revenue only. Amaziah told Amos that he was in the wrong place to obtain reward for that kind of a message; he should go back home and preach it to the people of Judah; they would be glad to hear such threats against Israel, and would pay him well for his message. Amos indignantly repudiated the implied charge and declared himself genuinely called of Yahweh to the task of prophecy. Thereupon he proceeded to prophesy with a vengeance, saying to Amaziah:

> Your wife will play the harlot in the city;
> Your sons and your daughters will fall by the sword;
> Your land will be distributed by measure;
> And you yourself will die upon an unclean soil;
> And Israel will be entirely carried into exile.[2]

The facts that brought Amos to this conclusion regarding Israel were the social wrongs that he saw rampant

[1] Amos 7:12 f. [2] Amos 7:17.

there. It was a "post-war" period, when, even as now, the rich seem to have been getting richer and the poor poorer. It was the great merit of Amos that he insisted upon fundamental morality as the supreme thing in human relations with God. There was no lack of ritualistic splendor in Israel; but in the eyes of Amos this was little better than an insult to Yahweh so long as justice was not operative between man and man. Amos was himself a poor man, or at most a man of moderate means. He understood the trials of the poor and he felt their burdens. It was out of a deep sympathy with men of his own kind that he spoke words of indignation and scorn against the rich oppressor. He returns to this subject again and again, never wearying of denouncing the conscienceless rich:

Thus has Yahweh said:
"For three transgressions of Israel,—
Yea, for four, I will not turn it aside;
Because they sell the righteous for silver,
And the needy for a pair of sandals—
Those trampling upon the head of the poor—
And they turn aside the way of the lowly;
And father and son walk in collusion;
So that they profane my holy name.
And they spread out pawned garments beside every altar;
And they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god."[1]

And again:

Hear this, you who trample upon the needy,
And cause the lowly of the land to cease, saying,
"How long until the new moon pass that we may sell grain,
And the Sabbath that we may display wheat,—

[1] Amos 2:6–8.

Diminishing the ephah and enlarging the shekel,
And perverting treacherous scales—
That we may buy the poor for silver,
And the needy for a pair of sandals,
And that we may sell the refuse grain?"[1]

The sensuous wives of the rich oppressors are roughly addressed thus:

Hear this word, O cows of Bashan, who are in the hill of Samaria,
Who oppress the weak, who crush the needy,
Who say to their lords, "Bring, that we may drink":
Yahweh has sworn by his holiness,
"Behold days are coming upon you
When they will lift you by the nose with hooks
And by your hindquarters with fish hooks,
And you will be dragged forth through the breaches, each one straight ahead,
And you will be thrown upon the dung-heap."
It is the oracle of Yahweh.[2]

Amos not only found fault with the social order in Israel, saying that the rich were using all kinds of devious methods to get the better of the poor, but he also denounced the type of worship prevalent in his day. There was no lack of rich ceremonial worship in the way of sacrifices and offerings and splendid accoutrements. But the spirit of true worship was entirely lacking. The difficulty was not that the worshipers were not wholly sincere and devout in the practice of the ritual, such as it was; but that, while zealous in the practice of ceremonial, they were living lives that lacked the fundamental moral quali-

[1] Amos 8:4–6.

[2] Amos 4:1–3. For textual changes adopted here, see Nowack, *Kleine Propheten* (2d ed., 1922), *ad loc.*

ties without which no worship, however elaborate, could be pleasing to Yahweh:

"Come to Bethel—and transgress!
To Gilgal—and multiply transgression!
And bring your sacrifices every morning,
Every three days—your tithes!
And burn a thank-offering of leaven,
And proclaim voluntary offerings—publish them abroad!
For so do you love to do, O children of Israel."
It is the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.[1]

And:

For thus says Yahweh to the house of Israel:
"Seek me, that you may live!
But seek not Bethel,
And do not enter Gilgal,
Nor pass over to Beer-sheba!
For Gilgal will surely be carried into exile.
And Bethel will become a nonentity.
Seek Yahweh, that you may live,
Lest fire flash forth upon the house of Joseph
And consume, with no one to quench it in Bethel."[2]

And further:

"I hate, I loathe your feasts,
And I will not accept your sacred conventicles;
Though you offer me your burnt-offerings
And your sacrifices, I will not accept them;
Nor will I look favorably upon the sacrifice of your fatlings.
Put away from me the noise of your songs;
Nor will I listen to the melody of your harps.
But let justice roll down like waters,
And righteousness like a perennial stream.
Was it sacrifice and offerings that you brought me
In the wilderness during forty years, O house of Israel?"[3]

[1] Amos 4:4 f. [2] Amos 5:4–6. [3] Amos 5:21–25.

It may hardly be supposed that Amos would have done away with sacrifice and ritual entirely if he could; he had not arrived at a conception of religion as purely ethical or theological and abstract. It was not ritual as such to which he objected, but rather the practice of ritual by people who acted as though that practice fulfilled all their religious obligations. Amos would not have had them stop the ceremonial; but he did insist that ceremonial without moral character and social justice was but an offense to Yahweh. The religion of Amos claimed the whole life and was not satisfied with any partial control.

One of the most striking aspects of the thought of Amos is his denunciation of the neighboring peoples. His list of the foreign nations upon whom he announces the doom of Yahweh includes Damascus, Philistia, Ammon, and Moab.[1] This interest of prophecy in outside nations was not wholly new with Amos. The traditions represent Elijah and Elisha as thinking of Yahweh as having some control over the internal affairs of Damascus. The J document in Genesis assigns the creation of the world to Yahweh. That did not imply a monotheistic conception, for in the ancient Semitic world national gods were commonly looked upon by their own peoples as responsible for the creation. The westward movements of Assyria in the ninth century also did much toward the enlargement of the Hebrew thought of God.[2] The international policy of

[1] The similar oracles against Tyre, Edom, and Judah are probably not to be attributed to Amos himself, but to later editors. For the discussion of these questions, see W. R. Harper, *loc. cit.;* but as defending their genuineness, see F. C. Eiselen, *The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament*, II (1923), 407 ff.

[2] See George A. Smith's chapter, "The Influence of Assyria upon Prophecy," in *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, I (1897), 44–58.

Omri and Ahab, made necessary by the imminence of the Assyrian peril, involved at least a sympathetic tolerance of the gods of the allies of Israel; and the actual conquest of the western states in general and of Israel in particular by Shalmaneser must have made necessary to the theologically minded a new adjustment of their ideas to fit the new facts. A loyal worshiper of Yahweh could not long endure the thought that Yahweh was inferior in power to the Assyrian gods. The only escape from this conclusion was to make Yahweh supreme over Assyria itself and to regard the movements of Assyria as a part of the plan of Yahweh for the conduct of his world. The Assyrian thus became ultimately for Hebrew thinkers the chastening rod of Yahweh's wrath against Israel, his own people. This process of enlargement of the scope of Yahweh's activity was already under way when Amos appeared as prophet. He used it effectively for his own prophetic purposes. It is an open question as to the extent to which these oracles against Israel's neighbors were motivated by wrongs committed against Israel by these peoples. In the case of Moab, at least, apparently, the offense for which punishment is threatened was a wrong of Moab against Edom. The date of this barbarity is unknown, but it may well have been in connection with the invasion of Moab by Israel, with Judah and Edom as allies.[1] If so, a crime against an ally of Israel would be only one degree less keenly felt than one against Israel herself. However that may be, it is clear that Amos resents in Yahweh's name the brutality of the offenses he charges against these peoples. He was here the mouthpiece of broad humanitarian principles for the violation of which he threatened

[1] II Kings 3:4–27.

the peoples with destruction. It is significant that this broadening of the God-idea appeared in close connection with ethical considerations, for in the domain of ethics there are no national barriers. As a matter of record, it should be said in this connection that Israel's achievement in monotheism, as well as its arrival at the thought of personal immortality, was by way of the ethical necessities of the passing centuries. When monotheism came it was an ethical monotheism, and when immortality was reached, it was an ethical immortality.

How did Amos arrive at his conviction that Israel was doomed to punishment and exile? Not by way of an intimate knowledge of or keen insight into the course of international politics. As a matter of fact, Amos did not name the agent through whom this punishment was to be executed. It is not at all likely that he knew. The kingdom of Israel in his day was more prosperous and powerful under Jeroboam II than it had been at any previous period. Assyria was suffering a continuous decline of power from the time of Adad-nirari's death in 782 B.C. until the accession of Tiglath-Pileser in 745 B.C. Between 782 and 772 B.C. Shalmaneser IV fought six campaigns against the kingdom of Urartu to the northwest of Assyria. Argistis, king of the Kaldi of Urartu, at one time was so successful that he pressed south to a point within three or four days' march of Nineveh. The successes of Urartu greatly encouraged the western states that were vitally interested in the outcome of the contest, if they were not even in league with Urartu. So Shalmaneser found it necessary to march west and attack Damascus in 773 B.C. His successor, Ashur-dan III, fought against Hadrach in Central Syria, in 772 and 765; and his successor was on

the defensive against an attack upon Arpad in Northern Syria by the Kaldi, of Urartu, in 754 B.C. That was the last of Assyria's foreign wars until the appearance of Tiglath-Pileser. Consequently, Assyria was in no condition to be regarded by any observer as an imminent peril to her neighbors about 750 B.C. Nor was the situation in Egypt at that time any more threatening to Western Asia. The Twenty-second Dynasty was drawing to a close, and was powerless both at home and abroad. Internal schisms paralyzed the strength of Egypt, and the pharaohs found themselves powerless to engage in campaigns in Asia. Amos clearly expected the calamity to come from the north;[1] but whether he thought of Assyria, Urartu, or the wild hordes of the more distant north, we have no means of knowing. The only thing of which he seems to have been certain was that Yahweh was about to punish Israel for its sins. His certainty, therefore, had its sure basis in his conviction of the justice of Yahweh. The agent through whom that justice should find expression he did not need to know. It was enough that justice would be done by Yahweh, the God of justice.

The message of Amos was in direct opposition to the prevailing thought of his age. His contemporaries were all interested in the great eschatological expectation of the coming of the Day of Yahweh. This great Day was for them the dawn of the New Age in which all the hopes and aims of Israel were to be realized. It would be marked by the overthrow of all foes and by a wonderful and continuous outpouring of the favor of Yahweh upon Israel. This was a type of thought that was well established in Israel and had become the orthodox hope of the genera-

[1] Amos 5:27; 6:7, 14; 7:17.

tions. Where and how it arose or whence it came we do not know.[1] But there it was, serving as the mainstay of Israel's ambition and patriotism. But to Amos such hopes and expectations were impossible. He, too, looked for the Day of Yahweh, indeed; but what a different Day! Not blessing and joy, but disaster and mourning were to be its outstanding characteristics. Israel's religious guides were wholly mistaken!

> Alas, for those who long for the Day of Yahweh!
> Wherefore, then, is your Day of Yahweh?
> It is darkness, and not light.
> It is as though a man were fleeing from a lion,
> And a bear met him;
> And he went into a house and laid his hand upon the wall,
> And a serpent bit him.
> Is not the Day of Yahweh darkness, and not light;
> Yea, deep darkness, with no brightness in it?[2]

And even as the pre-millennialists of the present day are looking for the end of the world to come at almost any moment, so it is probable that Amos did not put his coming Day of Yahweh far away. He rather seems to have been living in the shadow of its speedy approach. He did not make the mistake of attempting to fix the date upon which the great Day should dawn, but the vision of its retributive justice was the dominant thought in his mind.

Did Amos forswear all hope? Was there nothing in store for Israel but a certain fiery form of judgment? It is hardly credible that a prophet would have put himself to such pains, if he had seen nothing ahead but ruin for the

[1] Similar eschatological hopes seem to have been entertained in Babylonia and Assyria and in ancient Egypt; see e.g., H. Gressmann, *Der Ursprung der Israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie* (1905), pp. 142–58; cf. my *The Prophet and His Problems* (1914), pp. 3–35.

[2] Amos 5:18–20.

people to whom he preached. Why should any man preach, if he saw no possibility of pointing out a way of salvation? Amos must have had some future for Israel in mind. He preached judgment in order to turn Israel away from her sins and to lead her into the way of escape. He put forth a few suggestions of deliverance, always conditioned upon right conduct and a genuinely religious attitude.[1] But there is no confident portrayal of a glorious future.[2] The persistent note is one of tragedy. It will throw some light upon this to recall that Amos was not a citizen of the northern kingdom, but of Judah. He was engaging in a praiseworthy mission when he crossed the border and began prophesying to Israel; but he could perhaps contemplate the downfall of Israel with less emotion than would have been possible for an Israelite proper. From the point of view of his faith in Yahweh, he could always fall back upon his own people and look to them to carry on Yahweh's work in the world and to serve as the recipients of Yahweh's blessings.

About a decade after the appearance of Amos in Israel, Hosea came forth from the ranks of Israel itself. He was the prophet of the decline and fall of Northern Israel, and the only one of the writing prophets to spring from the soil of that kingdom. His prophetic career probably ran parallel with the end of Jeroboam's reign and the chaotic conditions that followed in Israel down to the accession of Pekah in 736 B.C.[3] During this period, the Assyrian

[1] Amos 5:4–6, 14 f.

[2] The closing passage of the book, 9:8*b*–15, is quite generally regarded as a later addition; see W. R. Harper, *op. cit.*

[3] Hos. 7:3–9; 8:4; for a full discussion of the date see W. R. Harper, *op. cit.*, pp. cxli f.; F. C. Eiselen, *The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament*, II (1923), 365–68; J. M. Powis Smith, *Amos, Hosea, and Micah* (1914), pp. 75–77.

Empire was reasserting itself in Western Asia. In 745 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser seized the throne of Assyria and inaugurated a new era of power. During the first ten years of his reign he was engaged in constant warfare against the peoples of the north, the south, and the west. But he was consistently successful and finally made Assyria master of the world, bringing the peoples of Babylonia, Urartu, and the states of Western Asia to acknowledge and submit to Assyria's power. In 738 B.C. Menahem, of Israel, paid tribute to Assyria.[1] But as in the case of Amos, so in that of Hosea, his judgment as to the disaster awaiting Israel was not based upon observation of the growing power of Assyria. He does, indeed, mention Assyria as a punitive agency; but he also mentions Egypt, and during this period Egypt was absolutely powerless.[2] The Twenty-second Dynasty came to a futile ending in 745 B.C., and the Twenty-third Dynasty ushered in "the total dissolution of the Egyptian State."[3] Hosea's message was based not upon political considerations primarily, but upon moral and religious convictions.

The personal life of Hosea, in whatever way it may be understood, had much to do with his prophetic activity. The facts regarding it are to be found in Hosea, chapters 1 and 3. The story there told has been treated as allegory and as the actual personal experience of Hosea.[4] This

[1] II Kings 15:19 f.; the king "Pul" of this passage is generally regarded as being identical with Tiglath-Pileser.

[2] Assyria is mentioned in Hos. 5:13; 7:11; 8:9; 9:3; 10:6; 11:5; 12:1; Egypt appears in 7:11, 16; 9:3, 6; 12:1. Both countries are looked upon as places of exile in 9:3, 6; 10:6.

[3] J. H. Breasted, *History of Egypt* (1909), pp. 539–45.

[4] For the history of the interpretation of Hosea's marriage, see W. R. Harper, *op. cit.*, pp. cxliii ff. and 208 ff.

latter view is today generally accepted. But we still differ as to the sense in which this personal history is to be understood. For a brief period in the nineteenth century, it seemed as though the view would carry the day that Hosea had fallen in love with a charming young woman and married her, only to find out later that she was untrue to him and was presenting him with children that were not his own. In the midst of this tragic situation, Hosea discovered that this was Yahweh's method of awakening in him the spirit of prophecy, for he, through this experience, was brought to understand that Israel had treated Yahweh just as Gomer was treating Hosea. Thereupon he put his wife under restraint and in separation from himself, in order that she might come to realize her great guilt and be taken back upon repentance into Hosea's family circle, even as Israel because of its sins must go into exile for punishment preparatory to restoration to Yahweh's favor.[1]

Attractive as this view is, there are certain obstacles in the way of its complete success in explaining all the data. In recent years there has been a marked tendency to revert to the older view that Gomer was a well-known prostitute whom Hosea married for prophetic reasons.[2] The main considerations involved in the interpretation of

[1] For an eloquent exposition of this view, see George Adam Smith, *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, I (1897), 232 ff.; and also W. R. Harper, *op. cit.*, pp. 206–24.

[2] For a full statement of this view see my *The Prophet and His Problems* (1914), pp. 109 ff. This position is supported also by C. H. Toy, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XXXII (1913), 75–79; C. Steuernagel, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1912), pp. 605 f.; George A. Barton, *Religion of Israel* (1917), pp. 99 f.; B. Duhm, *Israel's Propheten* (1916), pp. 98 ff.; D. Buzy, *Revue Biblique* (1917), pp. 376–423; E. Sellin, *Zwölfprophetenbuch* (1922).

Hosea's marriage are, in brief, as follows. The phrase, "a wife of harlotries," in Hos. 1:2 can only mean "a harlotrous wife," i.e., one who practices prostitution. It is exactly like such phrases as "a man of blood," i.e., a man who is famed for his bloody deeds. The description of Gomer as "a daughter of Diblaim"[1] is better rendered "a worthless woman," i.e., literally, "daughter of two cakes of figs," or worth but a couple of handfuls of figs.[2] The prophets were not averse to sensational proceedings, as may be seen from the fact that Isaiah represents himself as having walked the streets of Jerusalem in a state of nudity,[3] and that on another occasion he challenged Ahaz to put his preaching to the test by calling for any type of miracle that might occur to him.[4] The purpose of this strange marriage was to attract the attention of Israel and to impress Hosea's message upon his contemporaries. He shrank from no self-sacrifice, no matter how abhorrent, that seemed to him necessary to the success of his mission. By this astounding act, Hosea sought to drive home to the consciousness of his people the fact that while they were wedded to Yahweh as their God, they were nevertheless disloyal to him in that they were worshiping the Baalim, and so giving to these nature-gods of Canaan the homage and devotion that rightfully belonged to Yahweh alone.

The marriage narrative is given in two forms. In chapter 3, we are given the experience of Hosea from his

[1] Hos. 1:3.

[2] See E. Nestle, *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XXIII, 346, and XXIV, 234; and W. Baumgarten, *ibid.*, XXXIII (1915), 78.

[3] Isa. 20:1, 2. [4] Isa. 7:11.

own lips; in chapter 1 the same experience is recorded by another narrator. The two narratives are not representative of two stages in Hosea's marital life, as has commonly been supposed, but are merely two different accounts of one and the same situation.[1] The course of events in Hosea's home was apparently this: He felt himself driven to marry Gomer, whom everybody knew to be a woman of the street. Whether or not Hosea's affections were engaged is not clear. The term "love" in Hos. 3:1 is not convincing, for it is used in this very verse and elsewhere of other feelings than pure love. The marriage was for publicity purposes primarily in any case. He bought her at the price of a slave (3:2). He straightway subjected her to discipline and restraint for a period of some length. When Gomer came into Hosea's home and children were born, these children were given names of prophetic significance and became walking sermons. Whether or not Hosea was the father of these children is not clear, but the names assigned to two of them, at least, might point to their mother's unfaithfulness.

The prophetic significance of the marriage is clear. Israel, the bride of Yahweh, is disloyal and unworthy of Yahweh's great love. Therefore she must go into exile away from the presence of Yahweh until she learns the worth of Yahweh's love and longs for renewed fellowship with him. But, after this period of exile, she will be brought back home and given a new chance. So that from the very beginning of Hosea's prophetic career, he evidently preached both punishment and deliverance. The nature of Israel's disloyalty is clearly brought out in Hosea, chapter 2. It is that she gives gratitude and praise

[1] This was first pointed out by Steuernagel, *op. cit.*, pp. 605 f.

to the Baalim for the fruits of the soil, not acknowledging Yahweh as the giver of these gifts:

For she said, "I will go after my lovers,
Who give me my bread and my water,
My wool, and my flax, my oil and my drink."
Therefore, behold, I will hedge up her way with thorns,
So that she will not find her paths.
And she will pursue her lovers,
But not overtake them;
And she will seek them,
But will not find them.
And she will say, "I will go back to my first husband,
For it was better with me then than now."
And she did not know
That it was I who gave her
The corn and the new wine and the oil;
And that I increased her silver
And the gold which they made into the Baal.
Therefore I will take back my corn in its time,
And my new wine in its season;
And I will rescue my wool and my flax,
So that she cannot cover her nakedness.
And now I will expose her shame to the eyes of her lovers;
And none can deliver her from my hand.
And I will bring to an end all her mirth,
Her feasts, her new moons, and her sabbaths,
And all her fixed seasons.
And I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees,
Whereof she said, "They are my hire,
Which my lovers have given me."
And I will make them a wilderness,
And the beasts of the field shall devour them.
And I will visit upon her the days of the Baalim,
To whom she sacrificed,
And she put on her nose-ring and her necklace,
And went after her lovers;
But she forgot me! It is the oracle of Yahweh.[1]

[1] Hos. 2:5–13.

Words like these reveal a strange situation. Yahweh even now in the eighth century B.C. has not yet come to be thought of by Northern Israel as the God of the soil and its products. This was the struggle into which Elijah threw himself a century earlier. How long had it lasted? When the Hebrews came in as nomads from the desert, they were under the necessity of learning the arts of agriculture and civilization as embodied in the life of Canaan. The only possible teachers of these arts were their Canaanitish neighbors. Israel had to go to school to Canaanitish masters. But agriculture among early peoples was always, and is yet in many places, inseparably associated with religion. To learn agriculture as it was preached in Canaan was impossible without learning Baalism at the same time. It was the task of loyal Yahweh worshipers to learn to think of agriculture in association with Yahweh and to supplant Baal by Yahweh in the whole round of agricultural life. This was naturally a process requiring considerable time. If the Habiri of the Tell-el-Amarna Tablets are correctly connected with the Hebrews, the latter entered Canaan in the fifteenth century B.C., roughly speaking, seven centuries before the days of Hosea. The exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt cannot have happened later than the thirteenth century B.C. If the recognition of Yahweh as the God of the harvests was delayed five or seven centuries, how did it happen that Yahweh survived as the God of Israel? And why did he finally achieve the recognition that had been so long delayed? These are problems still awaiting solution.

Hosea's message centers in the thought of God. Amos had been vitally concerned about the wrongs done to man by his fellow-man; Hosea is equally concerned about the

misconceptions of God prevailing in the popular cultus. Amos objected to cultus as a wholly unsatisfactory substitute for righteousness; Hosea sees in the cultus of the time a gross misrepresentation of God. He was the first known prophet to attack image worship.[1] His conception of God was too spiritual to permit so crass a representation of Yahweh as an idol in human or animal form. He derided the idea that men by their own hands could make God.[2] That an ox or a calf should symbolize Yahweh to his people was for Hosea an intolerable thought. How absurd such materialistic thinking seemed to him appears from the scorn he put into words in the phrase, "men kissing calves!"[3] It was because of such sensuous conceptions and practices that Hosea came to the firm conviction that the people and their official guides in religion knew nothing about God. He reverted to this thought repeatedly:

> My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;
> Because you have rejected knowledge,
> I too will reject you that you shall not be priest of mine;
> And since you have forgotten the law of your God,
> I too will forget your children.[4]

> Harlotry, and wine and new wine take away the understanding,
> My people consults its tree,
> And its staff informs it.
> For a harlotrous spirit has led them astray,
> And they have played the harlot away from their God.[5]

Hosea displayed keen insight in this diagnosis of Israel's sin. He grasped the whole ethical and religious problem

[1] Hos. 4:12, 17; 11:2; 14:3.
[2] Hos. 8:6; 14:3.
[3] Hos. 13:2; cf. 8:5 f.; 10:5 f.
[4] Hos. 4:6.
[5] Hos. 4:11, 12. See also Hos. 4:14; 5:4; 6:6; 8:9 f.

in one comprehensive view. All Israel's sin and trouble were traced back by him to one single cause, viz., the failure of Israel to understand aright the character of Yahweh. If they would but learn to know Yahweh aright, the cultus would be rightly used and interpreted; the social order would be relieved of its abuses; and the foreign policy of Israel would be wisely conceived and conducted.

The political situation in Israel was a matter of great concern to Hosea. He was living in the midst of the troubled times following the death of Jeroboam. One king followed another in rapid succession. The air was surcharged with conspiracy all the time. He looked for the massacre by Jehu at Jezreel to be avenged upon Jehu's family.[1] He declared the murderers who succeeded one another upon the throne to be kings lacking the divine ordination to their office.[2] He boldly denounced the king and court for the unblushing sensuality of their conduct.[3] He threatened the royal house with destruction and the nation with exile.[4] Not least of Israel's crimes in Hosea's eyes was the spirit of distrust in Yahweh shown by the fact that the government was seeking to establish alliances or secret treaties with foreign powers. Sometimes the policy of dependence upon Assyria was dominant; but when the burden of such support became too heavy, interest turned to Egypt. But Hosea was certain that such policies were futile.[5] Yahweh, and he alone, could furnish Israel the help needed. To call in any other ally was to

[1] Hos. 1:4 f.
[2] Hos. 8:4.
[3] Hos. 7:3–7.
[4] Hos. 10:6; 9:3.
[5] Hos. 5:13; 7:8–12; 8:8 f.; 12:1; 14:3.

insult Yahweh grossly. Indeed such alliances, as a matter of fact, always involved some sort of formal acknowledgment of the god or gods of the allied power. Naturally, therefore, foreign alliances were opposed by all the prophets, who were nothing if not loyal to Yahweh as the only God to be acknowledged by Israel.

The text of Hosea as it now stands contains glowing pictures of the prosperity and glory in store for Israel after her punishment is past.[1] But these passages are in all probability the product of later editors.[2] Hosea was not without hope. He could not have preached to his people had he known that such preaching was futile and final and that complete destruction was inevitable for his people. All his work constituted a great effort to turn Israel's mind toward repentance, in order that escape might be found from complete destruction. He seems to have regarded captivity in foreign lands as certain. But he looked for that exile to bring Israel to its right mind and to prepare the way for a return to the homeland. The story of the marriage, however interpreted, presupposes the thought of restoration after the period of discipline. But Hosea was not concerned to picture the restored Israel in such definite, tangible, and materialistic prosperity as the pictures of the future in the book now present. If the text of the book is now arranged approximately in keeping with the order in which it was spoken by Hosea, it is of interest to see that Hosea's last message pleads with Israel to turn her back upon the sins of the past and seek earnestly the forgiveness of Yahweh:

[1] Hos. 1:10—2:1; 2:14–16, 18–23; 3:5; 11:8–11; 14:4–9.

[2] See the commentaries of W. R. Harper, Nowack, and Marti; and cf. E. Sellin, *Zwölfprophetenbuch* (1923), *ad loc.*

Turn, O Israel, unto Yahweh, your God;
For you have stumbled through your guilt.
Take with you words and return unto Yahweh,
Say unto him, "Pardon all our guilt,
And take away our sin;
That we may requite thee the fruit of our lips.
Assyria will not save us;
Upon horses we will not ride;
Nor will we say again to the work of our hands, Our God."[1]

[1] Hos. 14:1–3. There is no need to deny these words to Hosea; they are in close accord with the whole tenor of his message.

CHAPTER V

THE ASSYRIAN PERIL: FROM TIGLATH-PILESER TO SARGON

With the accession of Tiglath-Pileser to the Assyrian throne in 745 B.C., the empire took on new life. Tiglath-Pileser at once began active operations against his country's foes, and in 745–744 B.C. drove out the Aramean tribes that had encroached upon the eastern borders of Assyria between the Lower Zab and the Uknu rivers. In 743 B.C. he started west toward Syria, but after crossing the Euphrates in his march upon Arpad, he learned that Sardur III, of Urartu, had crossed the mountains and descended upon the upper valley of the Euphrates. This intervention of Urartu at a critical juncture in the history of Syria probably was due to deliberate co-operation between Syria and Urartu against Assyria. Tiglath-Pileser at once returned across the Euphrates and administered a decisive defeat to Sardur III. For the next three years Tiglath-Pileser campaigned continuously in Northern Syria, and in 740 B.C. overthrew Arpad. Thereupon Damascus, Tyre, and other states of North Syria submitted to him and the whole region was organized as a province of the Assyrian Empire. At the same time, the leading states of Central Syria paid him tribute. In 738 B.C. hostilities broke out in Central Syria which called Tiglath-Pileser west again. He devastated Hamath and reduced it to a province of Assyria. On this occasion, he received tribute from Menahem, of Israel.

At the same time, the peoples of Urartu were making trouble for Assyria. In 739 and 736 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser conducted campaigns against Urartu in the region to the south of Lake Van and restored the power and prestige of Assyria there. In 735 B.C. he attacked Turuspa, the capital city of Urartu, partly destroying it and devastating the whole land of Urartu. But the states of Syria rallied once more to the aid of Urartu, their ally, and Tiglath-Pileser was called west again in 735–734 B.C.

King Uzziah, of Judah, had died in 740 B.C. In that same year the call to prophesy had come to Isaiah, of Jerusalem (Isa. 6:1).[1] This call came in the form of a vision in the Temple at Jerusalem. The writing down of this experience may very well have followed at a somewhat later date; perhaps upon some occasion when he was challenged by the opposition to give proof of his right to prophesy. In that case his initial experience would be somewhat colored in the telling by the succeeding experience of his prophetic activity. This would account in part for the gloomy outlook of his vision. The content of the vision is very clear. The consciousness of the glory and majesty of Yahweh as very God overwhelms Isaiah to such a point as that he feels himself doomed to destruction because he has seen what no mortal may look upon and live. The term "holy" affirmed by the seraphs does not here connote a moral idea, but a metaphysical one; for it is the name applied to the very essence of deity itself

[1] The best commentaries on Isaiah are G. B. Gray (1912); G. W. Wade (1911); J. Skinner (1915); O. C. Whitehouse (1905); Bernhard Duhm (3d ed., 1914); and Karl Marti (1900); cf. also T. K. Cheyne, *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah* (1895). An excellent survey of recent literature on Isaiah is furnished by Kemper Fullerton, *Harvard Theological Review*, VI (1913), 478–520.

as distinguished from humanity. Thereupon one of the seraphs touches Isaiah's lips with a live coal taken from the altar and assures him that this act has cleansed him from impurity and put him in harmony with the exalted Yahweh. Immediately Isaiah hears a voice crying:

> Whom shall I send forth, and who will go for us?

To this call he instantly responds:

> Here am I! Send me.

The commission is then laid upon Isaiah to go and preach to his people; though he is assured, in the same breath, that the people will not listen to him and will be unable to understand him. To Isaiah's protesting question as to the length of such a ministry, the answer is given that it must continue till his people are totally destroyed. That a call such as that should come to a young man seems almost incredible. How could anyone dream of preaching if he were assured in advance that his work would be totally in vain?[1] The call, which Isaiah came to interpret in this gloomy way early in his career, even if he did not originally so conceive it, has a very important bearing upon the question as to whether Isaiah preached the messianic hope or not. There was nothing of messianism involved in his call. He felt himself charged with a message of unavailing denunciation and threatening. Overwhelming destruction is in store for Judah; but the means of the punishment is not yet clearly envisaged, as was the case also with Amos and Hosea.

[1] The last phrase of vs. 13 is lacking from the Greek version and is thus clearly marked as a very late addition to the text of Isaiah. It is probable that vss. 12 and 13 are wholly late, even though they do not hold hope, as vs. 13 does; see Duhm and Marti, *ad loc.*

The early preaching of Isaiah, in the years before the outbreak of the Syro-Ephraimitish War, was to a great extent a continuation and repetition of the message of his predecessors, Amos and Hosea. The similarity of his preaching to that of Amos would almost suggest the dependence of Isaiah upon the work of that older prophet. The sermons of Isaiah that belonged to this period are (1) "The Terror of the Coming Day of Yahweh";[1] (2) "The Fall of Judah's Wicked Leaders";[2] (3) "The Frivolity and Sensuality of the Women of Wealth";[3] (4) "The Parable of the Unprofitable Vineyard";[4] (5) "The Ruin of Samaria."[5] In these sermons Isaiah emphasizes the sin of Israel as it finds expression in idolatry, soothsaying, militarism, pride and vain-glory, materialism, sensuality, impoverishment of the poor, drunkenness, skepticism, bribery, and perversion of justice. The emphasis upon ingratitude in the parable of the Vineyard recalls Hosea's demand for love and loyalty toward Yahweh. The form of 9:8—10:4, with its strophes ending in a recurring refrain and its threat of downfall for Samaria, reminds us of the similar series of refrains in Amos 4:4–11. Amos' conception of the Day of Yahweh comes back with increased intensity in Isaiah's picture of its terrors. The character of the women whom Isaiah denounces suggests the epithet "kine of Bashan," which Amos applied to the same women;[6] and the crimes of the rich against which Isaiah protests are the same as those exposed by Amos.[7] The punishment threatened by Isaiah is a vague and

[1] Isa. 2:6–21.
[2] Isa. 3:1–15.
[3] Isa. 3:16–24.
[4] Isa. 5:1–24.
[5] Isa. 9:8—10:4 and 5:25–29.
[6] Amos 4:1.
[7] Cf., e.g., Amos 2:6–8 and Isa. 3:14 f.

terrible catastrophe sent by Yahweh, as it was in Amos, and not a specific and human event to be mediated by some historical agent. Isaiah's thought of the Remnant is again related to that of Amos[1] and belongs to this earliest period of his career. The name Shear-Jashub[2] was antecedent to the Syro-Ephraimitish War. It had probably been given the boy at his birth, and had been the occasion of one or more sermons at that time. The structure of the name shows that the emphasis was on the Remnant-idea and not upon the "return." Indeed, it is probable that the original form of the name was Shear-jesheb, and that it meant "a remnant will abide," not "will return."[3] In any case, the thought is that a mere remnant will survive the terrible disaster of the Day of Yahweh. It is a word of punishment, not of promise. This message of Isaiah's youth, with all its dire disaster, is addressed to both kingdoms. Amos and Hosea had been primarily, if not exclusively, interested in Northern Israel; but Isaiah was concerned quite as much with Judah as with Israel. He did not shrink from announcing the destruction of his own nation. Nothing could demonstrate more conclusively the absolute self-sufficiency of Isaiah's God: he is not dependent upon any nation in the slightest degree. Nor could anything prove more clearly the great outreach of Isaiah's faith; though the people of Yahweh perish at his hand, Yahweh himself will continue to be God.

A new aspect of the social and political situation presented itself with the approach of the Syro-Ephraimitish

[1] Amos 5:3–6, 15. [2] Isa. 7:3.

[3] See my article on Shear-jashub in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XXIV (1914), 210–24.

invasion of Judah. This war was an inheritance of Ahaz from Jotham, his father.[1] Apparently, a great coalition movement of the western states against Assyria was under way. In this movement Damascus and Samaria, at least, were involved. Judah had evidently refused to co-operate in the revolt, and was either neutral or pro-Assyrian.[2] Menahem, of Samaria, had made terms with Assyria in 738 B.C. His son, Pekahiah, probably continued the policy of submission to Assyria, but after two years he was assassinated by Pekah, who quite evidently was anti-Assyrian and perhaps pro-Urartu in his politics. This brought on the attack upon Judah. When the army of Damascus had joined forces with that of Samaria upon the soil of Israel, and a state bordering upon panic had seized the minds of the people of Judah and their king,[3] the conviction came to Isaiah that he must speak the will of Yahweh to his king. Accompanied by his little son, Shear-Yashub, he encountered Ahaz, who was on a tour of inspection of the water-supply of Jerusalem in anticipation of the threatened siege of the city. The message of Isaiah was to the effect that Ahaz should take heart and not be dismayed by two such futile foes as Rezin and Pekah. Though they were seeking to split Judah by internal factions[4] and to set up a new king who would be favorable to their interests, their plans were doomed to failure.[5]

[1] II Kings 15:37.

[2] Cf. the loyalty of Pesammu II and Bar-rekub, kings of Sam'al, to Tiglath-Pileser when Ya'u was leading him. See the inscription of Bar-rekub in G. A. Cooke's *North Semitic Inscriptions* (1903), pp. 171 ff.

[3] Isa. 7:2.

[4] On the meaning of Isa. 7:6 see A. Brux, *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, XXVIII (1912), 61–71.

[5] The second half of v. 8 is a gloss by a later hand, which, having in force if retained as original.

It was a call to unwavering faith in Yahweh. "If you do not believe, you will not be established."[1]

This first oracle did not accomplish its purpose. Therefore a second was given to Ahaz, either on the same day or at some other time. The challenge came to him to ask for the performance of a miracle, no matter how extraordinary it might be, and it should be done for him as a demonstration of the fact that the prophet was actually speaking the mind of Yahweh. Suppose Ahaz had accepted this offer, what then? But Ahaz declined, alleging his unwillingness to subject Yahweh to such a test. It is quite probable that Ahaz had gone so far in his own policy that he was afraid to risk the acceptance of the prophet's challenge. It might turn out that the prophet could do what he promised, and then Ahaz would be in an embarrassing position! On the other hand, what stupendous faith was involved in such a challenge on the part of Isaiah—a faith that stopped at nothing. After all, Isaiah was but calling upon Ahaz to exercise a trust in Yahweh that was puny as compared with Isaiah's own robust and gigantic faith. However, when Ahaz declined to choose a miracle, Isaiah proceeded to give him a "sign" from Yahweh himself:

> Behold, a young woman is with child and will bear a son and will call his name "Immanuel." For before the lad knows how to reject the bad and choose the good, the land on account of whose two kings you are in terror will be deserted.[2]

The meaning of this is that it will be a custom with expectant mothers to name their children "Immanuel," i.e.,

[1] In the Hebrew there is a clever play upon words which cannot be satisfactorily carried over into English.

[2] Isa. 7:14, 16. Vs. 15 is here omitted as a gloss; see Duhm's *Commentary, ad loc.*, and J. M. Powis Smith, *American Journal of Semitic*

"God is with us," in grateful recognition of the fact that Yahweh has delivered his people from their foes. The prophet is sure that this deliverance is close at hand. It is thus another call to Ahaz to have faith in Yahweh, just as the previous oracle was. The "sign" is not something extraordinary done in advance of the fulfilment of the prophecy, but it is an ordinary thing foretold before it happens.[1]

A third oracle given in connection with the Syro-Ephraimitish War is contained in Isa. 8:1–4. Here, again, Isaiah is concerned with a "sign" that is to demonstrate after the predicted event has come to pass that the prophet had known it and foretold it. He was bidden by Yahweh to prepare a clay tablet and to inscribe upon it in easily legible characters the four words, *lemāhēr shālāl hāsh bāz*, i.e., "for swift is spoil, speedy is prey." Two well-known men were called as witnesses to the writing of this name, one of them the high priest. Then, almost a year later, when the wife of Isaiah presented him with another son, the prophet bestowed upon him the foregoing name. The boy and the tablet together gave great prominence to Isaiah's prophecy of the overthrow of Damascus and Samaria. All three of the oracles considered must have been uttered before Isaiah became aware of the fact that Ahaz had summoned Assyria to his aid.[2]

Languages and Literatures, XL (1924), 292–94. The verse interrupts the close connection between vss. 14 and 16, and is best accounted for as an attempt on the part of a later reader to fix more definitely the date before which the prediction was to be fulfilled.

[1] For similar "signs," see Exod. 3:12; Isa. 37:30.

[2] II Kings 16:7 ff. Tiglath-Pileser's own account of his campaign against Damascus and Samaria is contained in his *Annals* and in another

Isaiah's desire was to encourage Ahaz to put his trust in Yahweh and not to make application to Tiglath-Pileser, of Assyria, for aid. As we know from II Kings 16:7, Ahaz took the apparently more practical program of appeal to Assyria. But was it in reality any more practical? By calling in Tiglath-Pileser, Ahaz put himself and his country under vassalage to Assyria, with the accompanying necessity of paying tribute. This obligation was responsible for much of Judah's later trouble. Had Ahaz heeded Isaiah, he would have had to put up a stiff resistance for a few months to the invaders, it is true; but Tiglath-Pileser would ultimately have come to his aid on his own account, for the Assyrian would not have been long ignorant of the fact that the whole northern movement was anti-Assyrian in its scope and purpose. Tiglath-Pileser could have been trusted to look out for Assyria's interests; and Judah would have been under no obligation to the great king. On the whole, the obligation would have lain the other way. Isaiah was not so impracticable a dreamer, on this occasion, at least, as might appear. As it was, Tiglath-Pileser came west and punished the rebels severely. Israel lost her territory east of the Jordan,[1] the population of which was deported to Assyria;[2] and Judah paid heavily for the relief she obtained through Assyria.

When the prophet learned that Ahaz had disregarded the repeated assurance from Yahweh, in that he had

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small inscription; see S. A. B. Mercer, *Extra-Biblical Sources* (1913), pp. 38–40; R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament* (1912), pp. 316–21; George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* (1916), pp. 368 f.

[1] II Kings 15:29.

[2] For Tiglath-Pileser's account of this see S. A. B. Mercer, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

called upon Tiglath-Pileser for help, the whole tone of his prophecy changed. One good reason why Isaiah so strenuously objected to the Assyrian alliance lay in the fact that it involved a recognition of the Assyrian gods and so involved disloyalty to Yahweh, as well as a heavy burden of tribute to be paid by the common people of the land.[1] That Isaiah's objections were well grounded is clear from the record in II Kings 16:7–18. Immediately after Ahaz returned from Damascus, whither he had gone to pay his respects to Tiglath-Pileser, he went to inspect the new altar that he had ordered to be built in the Temple at Jerusalem. This was a duplicate of an Assyrian altar which he had seen at Damascus; and it was erected on the site of the old altar of Yahweh which was displaced and reduced in rank. This, with other accessory changes, was all done "because of the king of Assyria." The robbery and impoverishment of Yahweh's Temple in order that the king and gods of Assyria might receive the tribute demanded by them, and the displacement of Yahweh's altar that in some way acknowledged the supremacy of Assur, god of Assyria, were more than Isaiah's loyalty to Yahweh could contemplate with equanimity.

To the days immediately following Isaiah's discovery of the faithless policy of King Ahaz probably belong the fragments of his prophecy now imbedded in Isa. 7:17–25 and 8:5–22. The verses here that may with assurance be credited to Isaiah himself are 7:18–20 and 8:5–8, 11–18. In these utterances Isaiah expressed his conviction that Ahaz, by rejecting the call to trust in Yahweh only, has

[1] What the narrator in Kings euphemistically calls "a present," Tiglath-Pileser in his Nimrod Inscription lists as "tribute"; see R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (1901), p. 57.

prepared for himself and his people a terrible disaster from which there can be no escape:

> Inasmuch as this people has rejected
> The waters of Shiloach that run smoothly;[1]
> Therefore, behold, the Lord will bring up upon them
> The waters of the River that are mighty and many;[2]
> And it will rise over all its channels,
> And run over all its banks;
> And it will sweep on into Judah, an overflowing flood,
> And will reach up to the neck.[3]

In Isa. 8:11–18 we find some words that were apparently spoken by Isaiah to a group of his followers and supporters. The precise date of their utterance is unknown, but it was prior to 721 B.C., when Samaria fell, and it may have closed Isaiah's activity in connection with the Syro-Ephraimitish War. Its position in the text, at least, points to such a connection. The exact bearing of this message upon that situation or any other definite one is uncertain.

> You shall not say "holy" of anything of which this people says "holy";[4] and what it fears you shall not fear or dread. Yahweh of

[1] The Hebrew text adds here an unintelligible phrase, saying something about "joy" and "Rezin, the son of Remaliah."

[2] The Hebrew text adds here "the king of Assyria and all his glory," which is probably a correct interpretation of Isaiah's thought by a later editor.

[3] Isa. 8:6–8*a*. The Hebrew adds here a clause that is clearly a later comment: "And the spreading out of his wings will fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel."

[4] The Hebrew has "conspiracy" for "holy"; but the two words are easily confused in Hebrew and the use of "holy" for Yahweh in the following clauses makes a strong probability for "holy" in the first verse. On the other hand, "conspiracy" would give a close connection with the Syro-Ephraimitish War.

hosts is he whom you shall call "holy"; and *he* shall be your fear, and *he* shall be your dread. And he shall be a sanctuary and a tripping stone and a stumbling block to both the houses of Israel; a trap and a snare to the inhabitant of Jerusalem. And many will stumble on them and fall and be broken and snared and captured.

Perhaps the prophet is here expressing his mind as to the new type of worship which Ahaz had imported from Assyria by way of Damascus.

Whatever may have been the occasion of the foregoing oracle, in Isa. 8:16–18 are found some instructions to his disciples and followers given at a time when he fully intended to close his prophetic career. Perhaps it was in a period of depression after the discovery that his counsel in the Syro-Ephraimitish crisis had been wholly ignored. He here puts his oracles in trust under the care of his disciples, declares his confidence in Yahweh, and states his conviction that he himself and his children, whom he has used as peripatetic sermons, will in course of time be recognized by everybody as signs and portents from Yahweh, i.e., it will be patent to all eyes that Isaiah was right and Ahaz was wrong. It is especially noteworthy in this connection that Isaiah seems to have given up hope for the deliverance of Judah; he seems to have been convinced that the nation was doomed; yet, he holds fast to his faith in Yahweh notwithstanding. He has, consciously or unconsciously, broken away from the national conception of Yahweh as God of the Jewish nation, and is now thinking of him as the God of a small group of the pious, the God of a non-political community of the faithful. The members of the community are still Jews, of course, but their relationship to Yahweh is primarily conditioned by their piety, not by their race. Neither Isaiah

nor any of his immediate successors carried this position further. A longer training in the school of suffering was the prime requisite to further progress.

The next crisis in Palestine involved the fall of Samaria and the exile of the people of Israel in 721 B.C. The experiences of 735 had not taught Israel the necessary lesson of submission to and acceptance of the yoke of Assyria. Hoshea, upon the death of the great Tiglath-Pileser in 727 B.C., promptly joined Egypt[1] and other western states in an attempt to throw off the Assyrian yoke; but Shalmaneser V (727–722 B.C.) quickly quelled this uprising and collected tribute from Hoshea and his allies.[2] In 725 B.C., however, revolt broke out again, headed by the same group. Hoshea seems to have been captured at once by the Assyrians,[3] but Samaria yielded only in 722–721 B.C., after undergoing the protracted agonies of a three-year siege.[4] The coup de grace was

[1] The name of the king of Egypt as given in II Kings 17:4 is So. The identification with any known pharaoh is dubious. The least unlikely attempt is that which makes him the same as the Sib'e who in alliance with the Philistines opposed Sargon in 720 B.C. and in 711 B.C., at which later time he was a general of the pharaoh. The cartouche of a minor dynast bearing the name Sb(y) has been found belonging to the same period as Hoshea. The equivalence of the Hebrew *w* and the Egyptian and Assyrian *b* is shown by many cases of interchange. See G. Möller, *Orientalistische Literatur-Zeitung* for 1919, cols. 145 ff.

[2] II Kings 17:3.

[3] No mention is made of Hoshea in the Assyrian account of the final capture of Samaria; and II Kings 17:4 states that Hoshea was imprisoned by Shalmaneser, who then proceeded to besiege the capital.

[4] For the reports of Shalmaneser and Sargon upon these events, see S. A. B. Mercer, *Extra-Biblical Sources for Hebrew and Jewish History* (1913), pp. 40–43; R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament* (1912), pp. 323–36.

given her by Sargon, the new king of Assyria, Shalmaneser having died while the siege was in progress.[1]

So great an event as the peril to Samaria could not fail to stir the mind of Isaiah. It was too near home to be disregarded. Further, the people of Samaria were also Hebrews and worshiped the same Yahweh as their brethren of the south. In Isa. 14:28–32, in its original form, we probably have an oracle spoken against Philistia at the time of the death of Tiglath-Pileser (727 B.C.), when the smoldering longings for freedom from Assyria were bursting into flame.[2] Isaiah put himself on record as convinced that the movement toward revolt was ill advised, and would bring down dire disaster upon the heads of the participants. The influence of Isaiah may have had much to do with keeping Judah quiescent. Perhaps Isa. 32:9–14 belongs to this period also. It is an oracle against the rich women of Jerusalem. They are denounced for their careless ease and told that their beloved city will be laid waste and desolate, "a joy of wild asses, a pasture for flocks." How unreal that must have sounded in the ears of people who had looked upon the substantial walls of Jerusalem and its great temple all their lives and had come to think of them as abiding forever! In the same period, or at an earlier date, belongs the scathing attack upon the women of Jerusalem in Isa. 3:16—4:1. Their absorbing interest in the details of their personal appearance is satirized mercilessly, and with considerable artistic skill. A similar dreadful fate for Jerusalem to that threat-

[1] II Kings 17:1–6 apparently credits Shalmaneser with the capture of Samaria; but the king who captured Samaria is not actually named.

[2] See Gray's *Commentary, in loc.*, for varying views as to the occasion and meaning of this oracle.

ened in Isa. 32:9 ff. is here held up for the contemplation of these sensuous leaders of the fashions of the city. The only prophecy directed straight at the people of Samaria themselves in the period just before their final overthrow is Isa. 28:1–4. This oracle was probably uttered early in the course of the revolt, before the final three-year siege had set in. The dissipated people of Samaria are thought of here as incapable of putting up a stiff resistance and as an easy and speedy prey to the victorious Assyrians. As a matter of fact, it took the army of Shalmaneser and Sargon three years to capture the city.[1] When we realize what a three-year siege by the most efficient war-machine of the ancient world must have meant to the citizens of Samaria, we may be a bit reluctant to accept Isaiah's characterization of the people and their leaders as morally degraded and powerless. A long siege is a severe test of character. The siege of Samaria, like the defense of Verdun, is an eloquent testimonial to the moral soundness of the people involved in those endurance tests.

The downfall of Samaria brought about the end of the northern kingdom, which now became an Assyrian province. Natives of other parts of the Assyrian Empire were imported to take the place of the twenty-seven thousand deported citizens. The result was the rise of a mixed people in Northern Israel, who were mongrel in religion as well as in blood.[2] With the cessation of the northern kingdom came also the cessation of its historical tradition.

[1] For the Hebrew record, see II Kings 17:5, 6, 24 ff. For the accounts of Shalmaneser and Sargon, see S. A. B. Mercer, *op. cit.*, p. 43; and R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament* (1912), pp. 317–26; and George A. Barton, *The Bible and Archaeology* (1916), pp. 369 f.

[2] See II Kings 17:25 ff.

The literature of the north was preserved only in so far as it fell into the hands of the southern Jews, with whom it underwent a radical revision from the point of view of the interests and needs of Judah. Judah was now brought face to face with Assyria, who became the nearest neighbor on the north. There was no longer any windshield for Judah against the bitter blasts from the north. Egypt, also, was now in even more immediate danger from Assyria than ever before. This situation was responsible for the nervousness of Egyptian politicians from this time on; and that in turn was a constant source of trouble for Judah. The prophets are now concerned only with the problems of Judah; but the problems of Judah were henceforth world-problems; and Yahweh's chances for world-recognition are now in Judah's hands.

CHAPTER VI

THE ASSYRIAN PERIL: FROM SARGON TO SENNACHERIB

The downfall of Samaria did not bring peace to Western Asia. The thirst for liberty among the small nations of the Mediterranean coast-lands could not be quenched by tyranny. Revolts followed one another in the Assyrian Empire with lightning-like rapidity. In 720 B.C., immediately after the great disaster of 722–721 B.C., Samaria joined with Hamath, Arpad, Simirra, and Damascus in a desperate struggle for freedom. Egypt, Philistia, and some Arabian tribes were also involved in this revolt. But Sargon quickly suppressed this rebellion, destroying cities, devastating countries, and deporting peoples, as in the case of Samaria in 721 B.C.[1] Again, in 715 B.C., Sargon had dealings with Samaria. After a campaign against some Arab tribes in that year, he settled some of his Arab captives in Samaria.[2] Right at the beginning of Sargon's reign, Marduk-apal-iddin, known in Hebrew as Merodach-baladan, had established the independence of Babylonia, wresting the crown out of the grasp of Assyria. Elam also joined with Babylon in the struggle against Assyria. Such a blow to the power of Sargon before he could establish himself firmly on the throne brought new hope and courage to all of the foes of Assyria. Among these not the least dangerous were the peoples of Urartu,

[1] See R. W. Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

[2] See Sargon's "Annals," in R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (1901), p. 60.

in the north, who became a constant peril to Assyria. Sargon conducted campaigns against Urartu and its allies in 719, 718, 716, 715, 714, 713, and 711 B.C. To add to Sargon's troubles, Shabaka, the Ethiopian, became master of Egypt in 712 B.C., and at once became active in stirring up difficulties for Sargon in the west. Sargon was thus completely surrounded by enemies. Elam on the east co-operated with Babylonia on the south; on the north, Urartu and its neighbors from the upper Mediterranean coast-lands to the eastern shores of Lake Urumia joined hands against him; and in the west and southwest, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Arabian clans completed the circle. But Sargon, like a lion surrounded by jackals, shook them all off and brought them into subjection.

Of immediate interest is the revolt of Ashdod referred to in Isa. 20:1 ff. This was part of a concerted movement against Sargon by Philistia, Egypt, Moab, Edom, and Judah in the years 713–711 B.C. The enterprise was a total failure, for the allies suffered an ignominious defeat at the hands of Sargon's forces.[1] In connection with this revolt, Isaiah again appeared in action. To this crisis in Judah's fortunes Isa. 20:1–6 is clearly to be attached; perhaps Isa. 28:7–29, 29:1–4, 22:15–18, 1:18–20, and 5:8–24 also belong here. The oracle in Isa. 20:1–6 evidently was spoken early in the course of the conspiracy, and its message was personally and vividly illustrated afresh every time that Isaiah appeared upon the streets of Jerusalem. This exhibition of himself for homiletical purposes extended over a period of "three years." This

[1] See Sargon's "Annals" and two other inscriptions for the Assyrian reports; S. A. B. Mercer, *Extra-Biblical Sources* (1913), pp. 45 f.; R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels* (1912), pp. 328–31; George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* (1916), pp. 371 f.

may mean continuous parts of three years, beginning, for example, in the latter part of 713 B.C., and ending in the beginning of 711 B.C. That Isaiah went about stark naked, there is no sufficient reason to doubt. That is the common meaning of the word used; that is called for by the application of the action in verse 4; and that was a common way of treating captives on the part of the Assyrian conquerors.[1] Through this dramatic procedure Isaiah sought in vain to keep Judah from participating in the revolt. He was convinced that Egypt and Ethiopia would render no adequate assistance against Assyria, but would themselves fall a prey to Sargon's might and suffer deportation of their population. His expectations in this latter respect were not completely fulfilled; Sargon did not set foot in Egypt, but he did force the king of Meluchha[2] to surrender to Assyria the fugitive king of Ashdod who had taken refuge with him. Whether any unusual punishment was inflicted upon Judah or not is told us by neither Sargon nor the Hebrew accounts. Certainly, heavy tribute would be levied at the least. Possibly Isa. 10:28–32 is the prophet's anticipation of a direct attack upon Jerusalem at this time. If so, he vividly describes the march as it progresses stage by stage up to the very outskirts of Jerusalem.

Isaiah's judgment upon the lives of the official priests and prophets of his day was very severe. He charged them with drunkenness and mad revelry, and with an

[1] See e.g., Eduard Meyer, *Sumerier und Semiten in Babylonien* (1906), p. 25; G. Contenau, *La Glyptique Syro-Hittite* (1922), Plate I; A. T. Olmstead, *History of Assyria* (1923), pp. 112, 115f., 126, 138; L. W. King, *Bronze Reliefs from the Gates of Shalmaneser* (1915), Plates IV, X, XV, XLVI, LXXIV.

[2] Apparently a name for Ethiopia or some part thereof.

attitude of scorn toward the truth of God as Isaiah himself preached it. They were putting their confidence in Egypt instead of trusting in Yahweh. That misplaced confidence would betray them into the hands of Assyria. Apparently, the covenant with Egypt was already operative, and just as Ahaz had imported Assyrian practices after his appeal to Tiglath-Pileser, so now with the Egyptian alliance have come in Egyptian religious customs;[1] but it was all to no purpose.[2]

To this same period, perhaps, belongs the denunciation of Shebna, the king's treasurer.[3] He doubtless was a leader of the court party opposed to Isaiah's policy, and so received the doubtful honor of special treatment at Isaiah's hands. Another oracle that has been much misunderstood may also belong here, viz., Isa. 1:18–20:

"Come, now, and let us confer together," says Yahweh,
"If your sins be like crimson, can they be white like snow?
If they be red like scarlet, can they be like wool?
If you be willing and listen, you will eat the good of the land.
But if you refuse and are stubborn, by the sword will you be consumed;
For the mouth of Yahweh has spoken."[4]

The prophet here says that it is preposterous for Israel to continue in outbreaking sins, and yet expect to reap the rewards of piety. If they would receive blessings from Yahweh as a nation they must conform to his requirements; they will fail to do so on penalty of destruction.

The last oracle belonging to the crisis of 711 B.C. is Isa. 5:8–24. Here Isaiah denounced the land-grabbing

[1] See Isa. 28:15–18. [2] Isa. 28:7–22; cf. 29:1–4. [3] Isa. 22:15–19.

[4] The treatment of the two clauses in vs. 18 as interrogative is grammatically permissible, and it is demanded by the context; see Gray's *Commentary, ad loc.*

nobles, who by oppression and extortion were driving men and their families off their little holdings and adding them to their great estates. The wealth they thus obtain by shameful measures they waste upon riotous living. When the prophet threatens them with judgment, they jeer at him and challenge him to make good upon his threats. Judgment will sweep away these men from the land and it will become desolate, a pasture land for flocks. All this will come to pass because the leaders of Judah have lacked understanding. Isaiah's panacea for all ills in this crisis, even as at the time of the Syro-Ephraimitish invasion, was faith in God. This would keep Judah from entangling alliances with foreign peoples who could do nothing for her of any value; and it would lead her to walk in paths of social justice and so guarantee to her the blessing of God. The cornerstone of the true Jerusalem consists of a great religious principle: "He who has faith will not be perturbed."[1]

The last great crisis in the history of Judah during the lifetime of Isaiah was the invasion of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. When the great conqueror, Sargon, died in 705 B.C., the subject-states of Assyria seized upon the occasion to strike for freedom. The reports upon the course of events vary. Sennacherib himself left a good account of his campaigns in what is now known as "the Taylor Prism."[2] In the first year of his reign he overthrew Merodach-baladan, of Babylon, who fled for his life. His allies the Elamites, certain Arabian peoples, and some Aramean clans were also conquered and deported. In the

[1] Hebrew is literally "hurry" or "hasten"; the text here is open to question.

[2] For the best translation of this inscription, see D. D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (1924), pp. 23–47 and 128 ff.

second year, Sennacherib conquered the Kassites and received tribute from the Medes. Having made things safe at home, he turned west in his third year. He first drove Luli, king of Sidon, in flight from his throne and put a substitute in his place as vassal. He then worked southward, overcoming everything in his path. Ashdod, Ammon, Moab, and Edom all brought tribute and submitted to his yoke.[1] He dethroned Zidka, king of Askelon, and put a new king in his place, under vassalage to himself. Joppa and three other Philistine towns were besieged and captured. The citizens of Ekron had revolted against their king, Padi, and had handed him over in chains to Hezekiah, who held him in prison. Upon the approach of Sennacherib they appealed to Egypt and Meluchha for help. The Egyptian army was encountered by Sennacherib at Altaku and decisively defeated. Then Ekron met its fate and was forced to take back Padi as king and become tributary to Assyria.

It was now Hezekiah's turn to be punished. Sennacherib declares that he besieged and captured "forty-six of his strong-walled cities and innumerable smaller cities round about them"; that he captured 200,150 people and live stock beyond reckoning; and that he shut up Hezekiah "like a caged bird" in Jerusalem, against which he threw up fortifications.[2] He then goes on to say that he turned over the captured cities to the kings of Ekron, Ashdod,

[1] This stage of the campaign is depicted upon a bas-relief in Sennacherib's palace which represents him seated upon his throne at Lachish and receiving tribute and submission from the defeated kings; see C. J. Ball, *Light from the East* (1899), pp. 191, 193; and A. T. Olmstead, *History of Assyria* (1924), p. 308.

[2] Sennacherib's figures are much exaggerated without doubt. There were not forty-six walled towns in all Judah. For the exaggerations of Assyrian records, see A. T. Olmstead, *op. cit.*, pp. 579 f. and 652 f.

and Gaza, and that Hezekiah, overcome by fear and by the desertion of certain foreign mercenaries, paid heavy tribute, rendered homage, and suffered the loss of rich booty.[1]

The Hebrew records of the campaign against Jerusalem are preserved in two recensions: (1) Isaiah, chapters 36–38, and (2) II Kings 18:13—20:21. The older of these two recensions is that in II Kings. They are alike in content except that the Kings recension has one episode described in II Kings 18:14–16 that does not appear in the Isaiah-narrative. The older narrative, apart from II Kings 18:14–16, however, is woven of two strands. The first of these includes II Kings 18:17—19:9*a*, 36, 37; the second is represented by II Kings 19:9*b*–35. According to the first, Sennacherib sent his *rabshakeh* with a detachment of troops against Jerusalem. The *rabshakeh* hailed the city and sought to persuade the representatives of Hezekiah and the people at large to surrender, since resistance to the overwhelming might of Assyria was absurd. The generals of Hezekiah carried the message to him; whereupon he besought Yahweh in the Temple and sent word of his trouble to Isaiah. Isaiah assured him that Sennacherib would be called back to Assyria by a rumor of trouble there, and then he would be slain. The *rabshakeh* returned to his master whom he now found attacking Libnah. Sennacherib heard of the approach of Tirhaka, of Egypt, with his army, and so returned to Assyria, where he met death at the hands of his own sons.

The second strand[2] covers the same course of events,

[1] For a study of this campaign, see A. T. Olmstead, *op. cit.*, pp. 297–315; cf. George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* (1916), pp. 372–77.

[2] II Kings 19:9*b*–35.

but differs in some details. The speech of the *rabshakeh* is now replaced by a royal letter from Sennacherib himself, saying in substance the same thing as the speech. Hezekiah's prayer in the Temple is now given in full. Isaiah sends word to Hezekiah at Yahweh's bidding that his prayer is answered; and an extended speech of Isaiah's is given in which Hezekiah is assured that no harm will come to him or his city. That very night the angel of Yahweh smote the camp of the Assyrians, leaving 185,000 dead.

In II Kings 18:14–16, we are told that Hezekiah sent to Sennacherib at Lachish proffering his submission and declaring his readiness to pay whatever Sennacherib might demand. The penalty laid upon him was thirty talents of gold and three hundred talents of silver. Hezekiah emptied his treasury and stripped the gold decorations from the temple of Yahweh and sent the king of Assyria what he demanded.

What are these narratives worth? The last one mentioned at least agrees with the account of Sennacherib himself. Even the amount of gold surrendered by Hezekiah is the same in the Assyrian and the Hebrew narratives. Sennacherib has magnified the silver contribution undoubtedly. It is not at all likely that the Hebrew narrative would have invented such a humiliation of Hezekiah as this account involves. Sennacherib did receive tribute at Lachish from the kings of the region, as shown by his bas-relief. Everything thus supports the trustworthiness of this record in II Kings 18:14–16.[1]

The account in II Kings 19:9*b*–35 contains serious

[1] This has been recognized generally since Stade said that II Kings 18:13–16 was the only historical portion in the Sennacherib story of II Kings and Isaiah.

difficulties. The prophecy of Isaiah in verses 21–31 is evidently an insertion in the story; verse 32 continues verse 20 directly. The purpose of this narrative quite clearly is to magnify the prophet Isaiah, who becomes the central figure in it. The figure "185,000" for the slain of the plague is beyond all possibility of fact. No such rate of mortality in so short a time and on so large a scale was ever known. The army of Sennacherib would hardly have attained such a size as this number involves.[1] Shalmaneser at Karkar claims to have defeated the joint army of twelve kings, numbering in all 71,900 men. The chances are that he magnified his foe to enhance his own glory. The same king says that he crossed the Euphrates with 120,000 troops. The feeding of an army of 185,000 on the scanty resources of Judah would have been a difficult problem for Sennacherib. The great king made no reference whatsoever to any such disaster as is here described. The appalling character of it would have made complete silence impossible; indeed, such a disaster would probably have cost Sennacherib his throne; for he was not without enemies. The story of Herodotus does not furnish much support for this narrative. His horde of mice that gnawed the bowstrings of the Assyrians did not, in any case, kill them; nor did they put the rest of the Assyrian equipment out of commission. The bowmen were not, so far as Assyrian records show, a preponderating element in the Assyrian armies.[2]

The narrative in II Kings 18:17—19:9*a* is lacking in events, but well supplied with speeches. There is no rea-

[1] For the size of Assyrian armies, see J. Hunger, *Der Alte Orient* (1911), No. XII; B. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien* (1920), pp. 101 f.; and Menitius, *Das assyrische Heer und sein Organization.*

[2] See A. T. Olmstead, *op. cit.*, pp. 83 and 111.

son to doubt the sending of an embassy to demand the surrender of Jerusalem. It may seem unlikely that Hezekiah should have depended so much upon the advice of Isaiah, in view of the fact that he had spurned that advice thus far in his international policy. The reference to Tirhaka at the end of the account creates trouble. Tirhaka did not take the throne of Egypt until 688 B.C., thirteen years after the campaign of 701. He may have been in command of this expedition to relieve Jerusalem before he came to the throne, in which case this narrative makes him king prematurely.

To sum up the situation: the difficulties involved in attaching the events of the Hebrew tradition to the campaign of 701 are so many and so great that scholars have shown a tendency to create a second and later campaign of Sennacherib's against Jerusalem and Egypt.[1] But sober criticism finds no sufficient evidence as yet for any such campaign.[2] So far as Jerusalem is concerned, it is difficult to see what need there could be of another expedition from Assyria after the drastic punishment inflicted on Judah in the campaign of 701. Judah must have been completely prostrated if the Assyrian record is at all true to fact. It would seem, indeed, that the disaster to Judah was so overwhelming that the Hebrew tradition felt the need of a corresponding blow to Assyria, and proceeded to create such a counterpoise for the sake of the honor of Yahweh.

[1] H. Winckler, *Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen* (1892), pp. 32 ff.; R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Texts* (1912), p. 338; George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* (1916), p. 377; I. Benzinger, *Kurzer Hand-Kommentar* (1899), *ad loc.*

[2] See e.g., D. D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (1924), pp. 12 ff.

It now remains to see what the prophets did in the situation from 705–701 B.C. Isaiah did not hide his head at this time. He came to the fore with unflinching courage. When Merodach-baladan was working up his revolt against Sennacherib, he sent an embassy to Hezekiah to persuade him to join the movement.[1] The account of the visit is given in Isaiah, chapter 39 (=Kings 20:12–19). The visit was made under the guise of solicitude for the health of Hezekiah. But it did not escape Isaiah's eye that the king showed the embassy all his resources. This narrative was written long after Isaiah's day,[2] but it is historical in that it records an actual embassy to Hezekiah and in that it reflects correctly Isaiah's attitude toward political and military attempts to throw off the Assyrian yoke.

Isaiah was equally outspoken in his denunciation of the alliance with Egypt. In his judgment, such expectations of aid are doomed to disappointment. Egypt is powerless to bring relief; she will but increase the punishment from Assyria. In Isa. 30:1–17 and 31:1–3 such sentiments as these are plainly uttered, e.g.,

> The Egyptians will help in vain and to no purpose.
> Therefore have I proclaimed concerning this:
> "Rahab[3] who is brought to an end."[4]

[1] Merodach-baladan was king of Babylon from 721–710 B.C., when Sargon drove him out of Babylonia. But upon the death of Sargon, he again seized the throne of Babylon and held it for nine months, being finally dislodged by Sennacherib in 704. It is not clear at which of these periods the embassy was sent.

[2] See the commentaries of Duhm, Marti, and Wade on Isaiah, and cf. Benzinger and Kittel on Kings.

[3] For other references to "Rahab" see Ps. 87:4; 89:10; cf. Isa. 51:9; Job 9:13; 26:12.

[4] Isa. 30:7.

In contrast with the feverish policy of Hezekiah, who is seeking aid in every quarter but the right one, Isaiah reminds him again of the necessity of faith in Yahweh, to which he had previously summoned Ahaz, viz.,

> For thus did the Lord Yahweh, the holy one of Israel, say:
> "Through return and rest you will be delivered;
> "Through quietude and confidence will your might be."
> But you were not willing.
> And so you said, "No!
> Upon horses we will flee."
> Therefore you shall flee.
> "And upon racers we will ride"; therefore your pursuers shall be swift.
> You will flee—a thousand at the battle-cry of five,
> Until if any of you survive, you will be like the staff on the top of the mountain,
> And like the banner on the hill."[1]

Apparently, Isaiah's messages in connection with Sennacherib's invasion were purely denunciatory. He saw no other way than submission to Assyria as Yahweh's ordained ruler of the world. All attempts to find deliverance through alliance with other nations were doomed to failure. It was Hezekiah's duty to remain subject to Sennacherib. Any contrary policy would bring ruin. The sins of Judah were so venal and blatant that deliverance from punishment was out of the question; repentant endurance of chastisement was the necessary program for Hezekiah. Isaiah had come to the conviction by the time of the invasion of Sennacherib that the people of Judah were blinded by their passion for freedom to the realities of life and were determined to rush on madly, not knowing that they were headed for destruction. Their spiritual guides were blind leaders of the blind.

[1] Isa. 30:15–17.

Astonish yourselves and be astounded!
Blind yourselves, and be blind!
They are drunk; but it is not wine;
They stagger, but it is not liquor.
For Yahweh has poured out upon you a spirit of sound sleep;
And he has closed your eyes—the prophets;
And your leaders—the seers—he has blindfolded.[1]

When the advance of Egypt seemed to promise relief, in that it distracted Sennacherib's attention and perhaps necessitated some withdrawal of troops from Jerusalem, the city went wild with joy. But Isaiah's opinion of the outcome was not changed. In the midst of the chorus of joy and praise, he uttered a piercing and discordant note. In 22:1–4 he portrays the destruction that he sees certainly in store for Jerusalem and Judah. He describes the vain efforts toward the defense of the city, and contrasts these with the failure to turn to the God of hosts in penitence and fear. A spirit of reckless revelry has taken the place that belonged to sorrow for sin.

"Eat and drink; though tomorrow we die."
But Yahweh of Hosts has revealed himself in my ears:
"This guilt of yours will not be expiated until you die,"
Says the Lord Yahweh of Hosts."[2]

The underlying causes for the chastisement which Judah and Jerusalem were undergoing are listed in Isa. 1:2–17, 21–23. After first charging Judah with base ingratitude and disloyalty toward Yahweh, the prophet proceeds to describe the condition of Jerusalem as it was when Hezekiah was "shut up like a caged bird" in his own capital. He then protests against the elaborate cultus of his day which the people were substituting for the practice of justice and righteousness. Isaiah did not op-

[1] Isa. 29:9, 10. [2] Isa. 22:13, 14.

pose ritual per se; he was but objecting to the exclusive places it occupied in the minds of the people; they were making ritual and religion synonymous terms. He would enrich religion by giving a larger place to justice and righteousness as requirements of Yahweh.

When you spread forth your hands,
I will hide my eyes from you.
Yea, when you multiply prayers,
I will not hear.
Your hands are filled with blood.
Wash yourselves; purify yourselves.
Put away the wickedness of your deeds
From before my eyes.
Cease to do evil;
Learn to do good.
Seek justice;
Relieve the oppressed,
Give justice to the fatherless;
Plead the cause of the widow.[1]

The deflection of Judah and Jerusalem from the right way and their disloyalty to the high ideals of a true Yahweh worship, Isaiah pictures in the following vivid terms:

Alas, that she has become a harlot,—the faithful city,
That was full of justice, righteousness used to dwell in her,
But now—murderers!
Thy silver has become slag;
Thy liquor is diluted[2] with water.
Thy rulers are unruly and companions of thieves;
Everyone loves a bribe and pursues after rewards;
To the fatherless they do not grant justice,
Nor does the cause of the widow come before them.[3]

This kind of message was poor comfort in troublous times. If spoken in connection with the siege of Sen-

[1] Isa. 1:15–17. [2] Literally, "circumcised." [3] Isa. 1:21–23.

nacherib or at any other critical time, the patience of the populace and the government was in striking contrast to the state of mind in every country during the world-war. We had no patience with criticism; we called it disloyalty. Hezekiah and his contemporaries must be given credit for a breadth of mind and tolerance of spirit that arouse wonder. Or was it that the prophets were privileged characters and had enjoyed liberty of speech so long that no one dreamed of denying it to them in a time of crisis? They were under the protection of Yahweh, and it was dangerous to do violence to their persons. The condition of the people and country to which Isaiah was preaching such messages is thus pictured by him:

The whole head is sick,
And the whole heart faint.
From the sole of the foot to the head,
There is no soundness within,—
But bruises, blows, and bleeding wounds;
They have not been pressed out, nor bound up,
Nor have they been softened with oil.
Your land is laid waste,
Your cities are burned with fire;
Your land—aliens are consuming it in your presence,
And it is a waste, like the overthrow of Sodom,[1]
And the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard,
Like a lodge in a cucumber patch, like a watchman's tower.
"If Yahweh of Hosts had not left us a remnant, though small,
We had been like Sodom, we had resembled Gomorrah."[2]

The only known situation to which these words closely apply was the invasion of 701 B.C. Isaiah's sympathy with his country did not blind his eyes to its moral defects. In-

[1] Hebrew text has "strangers"; probably an error.

[2] Isa. 1:5–9.

deed, the prophetic theory of life would make him more than ever sure of the sinfulness of his people; for that identified prosperity with piety and political and military reverses were evidence of sin. No louder testimony to the sinfulness of Judah could be imagined than the fearful devastation wrought by Sennacherib's army. Sennacherib was the agent of Yahweh's wrath against his wicked people, and the blows of Assyria were loud calls to national repentance and atonement.

Contemporary with Isaiah and taking the same general attitude toward Jerusalem was the prophet Micah.[1] The general period of Micah's activity is attested by Jer. 26:18 f. as lying within the reign of Hezekiah. It has been claimed that Micah must have prophesied before 721 B.C., because of his prophecy against Samaria in 1:5, 6. But Samaria was not destroyed in 721 B.C., nor did it cease to be a trouble to Assyria from that time on. Indeed, in 720 B.C. Samaria as member of an anti-Assyrian coalition was in revolt against Sargon, and she was an occasion of solicitude to Assyria for years after that.[2] As long as Samaria was standing and was a possible source of trouble to the western states in general and to Judah in particular, it was quite in harmony with the custom of the prophets that Micah should have been prophesying her destruction. Of the seven chapters composing the Book of Micah, only the first three were the product of his own mind and heart. Even in these, there is found some later material,

[1] See J. M. Powis Smith, *Book of Micah*, "International Critical Commentary," 1911); T. K. Cheyne, Cambridge Bible (1895); S. R. Driver, Century Bible (1906); G. A. Smith, *Book of the Twelve* (1896), Vol. I; W. Nowack, *Die kleinen Propheten* (3d ed., 1922); Marti, *Dodekapropheton* (1904); E. Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch* (1922).

[2] See *Micah* ("International Critical Commentary," 1911), p. 20.

viz., 1:7, 11 and 2:12, 13.[1] In chapters 4–7, some few verses may have originated in Micah's time, viz., 4:14; 5:9–12; 6:9–16; and 7:1–6.[2] Since the origin of these passages is wholly uncertain and since they add little that is new to chapters 1–3, they will be left out of consideration here.

Micah was a product of the countryside, whereas Isaiah was a child of the town. Micah's home was at the edge of the foothills, on the border of the Shephelah, the low-lying maritime plain. He had the clear vision of the man used to open spaces and to contemplation of the far-reaching ocean. His sympathies were those of the farmer. His soul burned with anger against the rich oppressors of the great city. He lashed the unscrupulous exploiters of their fellow-men with words that burned. He felt the sufferings and sorrows of the poor.

His message, starting with announcement of destruction upon Samaria and chastisement of Jerusalem, pictures the progress of a conquering foe from city to city, who carries the peoples into captivity (chap. 1). He then describes the social wrongs that have stirred the wrath of Yahweh against this people. The rich have expropriated the lands of the poor; they have made women and children homeless; and they have refused to listen to the words of the true prophets, preferring preachers like-minded with themselves. Therefore, destruction of a terrible sort is ordained for them (chap. 2). He then charges the leaders with gross abuse of their powers for the pur-

[1] For the considerations weighing against these, see my *Commentary, ad loc.*

[2] For the history of the criticism of chaps. 4–7, see *Micah* ("International Critical Commentary," 1911), pp. 9–16.

pose of their own enrichment in that they have robbed the poor and treated the weak with violence:

Hear now, you heads of Jacob,
And rulers of the house of Israel:
Is it not your place to know justice,
You who hate good and love evil?

But they eat the flesh of my people,
And their skin they strip off from upon them;
And they lay bare their bones and break them up,
Like meat in the pot, and flesh within the caldron.

Then will they cry unto Yahweh,
And he will not answer them;
But will hide his face from them,
Inasmuch as they have made evil their deeds.[1]

Another class of influential people then receives Micah's attention, viz., the officially approved prophets. He exposes their methods and motives and sets them in sharp contrast with himself.

Thus says Yahweh
Regarding the prophets who lead my people astray,
Who when they bite with their teeth preach prosperity;
But as for him who puts not into their mouths—
Against him they declare war.

Therefore it will be night for you, without vision,
And darkness for you without divination.
Verily, the sun will set upon those prophets,
And the day will become dark over them.

And the seers will be ashamed,
And the diviners will blush,
And they will cover the upper lip, all of them,
Because there is no answer from God.

[1] Mic. 3:1–4.

But I, indeed, am full of power,
And justice and strength,
To declare to Jacob his transgression,
And to Israel his sin.[1]

The closing oracle groups the three great classes of leaders together—the princes, priests, and prophets. It makes them jointly responsible for the coming disaster, and foretells the fall of Jerusalem in sledge-hammer phrases.

Hear this, now, you heads of the house of Jacob,
And rulers of the house of Israel;
Who abhor justice,
And pervert all that is right;
Who build Zion with blood,
And Jerusalem with iniquity.

Her chiefs judge for a bribe,
And her priests give oracles for hire,
And her prophets divine for money;
Yet they lean upon Yahweh, saying,
"Is not Yahweh in the midst of us?
No evil can befall us."

Therefore, because of you,
Zion will be ploughed as a field,
And Jerusalem will become ruins,
And the mountain of the house a high place in a forest.[2]

Isaiah and Micah alike seem to have anticipated the downfall of Jerusalem[3] and the consequent end of Judah's independent nationality. How could they think of the

[1] Mic. 3:5–8. [2] Mic. 3:9–12.

[3] Budde, in an article on "Isaiah" in the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XLI (1923), 154–203, makes much of the claim that Isaiah never definitely foretold the fall of Jerusalem. This claim lays undue stress on such fine distinctions as "Jerusalem will *stumble* and Judah

religion of Yahweh continuing after his nation had ceased to be? It is clear that neither of these prophets ever for a moment thought of Yahweh as passing out of existence along with his nation. But a God with no worshipers was inconceivable to the Hebrew mind. How, then, could Yahweh's worship be continued? Two elements enter into the answer to this question. Micah, as a rustic, evidently did not identify the perpetuity of the nation with the continuous existence of Jerusalem. Indeed, the great city was to him little more than a cesspool of iniquity. He thought of the real Judah as represented by the simple folk of the countryside. The city must be destroyed, but the nation will continue through the solid and substantial people from the country districts. He does not work out the details of a new national organization on such a basis, but his hopes centered in the character of such people as he had learned to know by close observation of the simple home life of the farming class. A second fact familiar to both Micah and Isaiah was the object-lesson constantly before their eyes, across the northern border of Judah. For twenty years Israel had ceased to be an independent government. In 721 B.C., Samaria had been captured by Sargon and a percentage of the population carried into exile. Since that time Northern Israel had been an Assyrian province. But the religion of Yahweh had not gone out of existence there along with the government. The great mass of the population had remained at home. They

will *fall*" (Isa. 3:8). It exempts Jerusalem from such general statements as "cities be laid waste without an inhabitant" (Isa. 6:11). It fails to do justice to the full force of Isa. 30:15–17. A city as the sole survivor in a deserted and desolate country would be in a sorry state. Micah the Morashtite did not shrink from announcing the fall of the city at the time of Sennacherib's invasion. Was Isaiah less courageous?

had gone on for two decades worshiping Yahweh at the local shrines in very much the same way as before the fall of the capital. It was a more or less corrupt worship, perhaps, but it had always been so. In any case, it was Yahweh-worship, and it remained down to a much later time, and kept the books of the Pentateuch as its Scripture. In the light of that experience, Isaiah and Micah could think of Yahweh's worship as going on even after the cessation of Judah's sovereignty. The official religion might be given to some Assyrian god, but the mass of the faithful Jews would remain loyal to Yahweh through all trials. Isaiah seems to have had something of this sort in mind in Isa. 8:16–18.

The Book of Isaiah is full of glowing messianic prophecies. Are these all later additions to his oracles? Was there no messianic hope in the eighth century B.C.? The utterance of Amos (5:18) shows that there was such a hope in the air in that age. But Amos took that hope and converted it into a threat of punishment and catastrophe. That hope was a part of the eschatology of the masses during this period. Hosea had no sure word of hope for the north (Hos. 2:11–13; 9:12–17; 13:12–16[1]). Isaiah's Shear-yesheb prophecy, whether applying to Israel or Judah, was primarily a message of punishment. The content of Isaiah's call as recorded in chapter 6 excludes all possibility of hope. "If there be even a tenth in it, it shall again be eaten up." Leaving aside the detailed discussion

[1] Hos. 13:14 is best rendered interrogatively, viz.:

"Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol?
Shall I redeem them from death?
O death! Where are thy plagues?
O grave! Where is thy destruction?
Repentance is hid from my eyes."

of the individual messianic prophecies in Isaiah, attention is called here to some general considerations on the subject.

The general charge against the many messianic utterances placed upon Isaiah's lips is of threefold character: (1) How are we to explain the sudden rise and appearance of messianism in Isaiah? The popular thought was probably full of that sort of hope at all times; but was Isaiah at all in sympathy with that popular thought? Was he not an idealist and consequently at all times in a critical and hostile temper toward the conventional attitudes of his time in both the religious and the social areas? (2) Is not the presence of this messianic material inexplicable upon the lips of Isaiah? His message was so clearly dominated by the thought of disastrous punishment that it is difficult to imagine him as a spokesman of an opposite type of thought. It is hard to smile on one side of the face and at the same time cry upon the other; but Isaiah is in just that state of mind according to the make-up of the Book of Isaiah as it now stands. Moreover, there is no connecting link between the two types of thought. The passage from one to the other is abrupt and unmediated. Indeed, it has been maintained with force that the present messianic utterances are inserted with regularity after each passage of threat and denunciation to serve as antidotes. These passages lack all formal connection with their contexts, and they are equally defective in agreement with the thought of the undisputed genuine portions of Isaiah. Again, how can we explain the hostility toward Isaiah on the part of the people,[1] if he preached such encouraging messages as are attributed to him in connection with Sennacherib's invasion and in chapters 9, 11, 32, and

[1] See, e.g., Isa. 30:9–11.

35? (3) If Isaiah and Micah preached a message of comfort, it is strange that the contemporaries of Jeremiah should have remembered Micah's threat against Jerusalem[1] and have forgotten everything else. Not only so, but Jeremiah himself in his contest with Hananiah the prophet in the Temple court[2] met Hananiah's confident message of deliverance and hope with a challenge to read the history of prophecy and see if it was not true that all the preceding prophets had preached "of war, and of evil, and of pestilence," and not one of them had been a prophet of prosperity. Jeremiah would never have made such a challenge if the prophecies of Isaiah had been known to be largely devoted to messianic hopes; nor would Hananiah have missed such a glorious chance to humiliate and confound him if it had been common knowledge that the great Isaiah was a prophet of good news. Jeremiah's challenge was not taken up, because the facts were on his side.

If we ask how the messianic oracles came to be placed in these early prophetic books, where they did not originally belong, we may remind ourselves of a similar procedure in the religion of ancient Greece. The Greek oracles at the time of the Persian invasions of Greece were at first quite friendly toward the Persians, anticipating the success of the Persians and preparing for kindly treatment at their hands. But things went badly with the Persians, and they suffered defeat and had to withdraw. Thereupon the oracles changed their attitude and sought in every way to give a new interpretation to their earlier utterances. The same motive, in part, operated here in the minds of later editors. But for the most part, the motive of the additions was twofold. There was the desire to

[1] Jer 26:18. [2] Jer. 28:5–9.

stimulate the faith and hope of suffering Judah so that the religious life of Judah might survive the successive shocks it encountered; and perhaps this was the greatest incentive to these additions. There was also the desire to magnify the glory of Yahweh; and this was done by making him reveal to his prophets long in advance the course of events as it actually proceeded. Furthermore, if Yahweh could be shown to have foretold this course of events, then it followed that the promises of glory supposedly made at the same time and renewed in later times would likewise be fulfilled. The messianic prophecies, no matter when made, were the expression of an exuberant faith and an undying hope.[1]

[1] Cf. J. M. Powis Smith, "Isaiah and the Future," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, XL (1924), 252–58.

CHAPTER VII

THE PROPHETS AND THE SCYTHIANS

The reigns of Manasseh and Amon covered a period of reaction. The devastation wrought by Sennacherib had weakened and depressed Judah to a very low level of vitality. Not only so, but under Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, the successors of Sennacherib, Assyria's power had been carried down into Egypt and Thebes had fallen before it (661 B.C.). Judah had continued under the burden of a heavy tribute to Assyria.[1] Esarhaddon made three campaigns into Egypt before his death in 668 B.C., and brought the entire west land into complete subjection. Ashurbanipal also was three times in the west and was equally successful. It goes without saying that these kings saw to it that Judah kept up her payments of tribute regularly.[2]

Ashurbanipal died about 627 B.C. Even before his death there were not wanting signs of deterioration and decrepitude in the Assyrian Empire; and after his death, the descent of the great Empire into chaos and death was very rapid. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising to read in Herodotus of a great invasion of Scythians sweeping down from the north over the western portions of the territory of Assyria:

[1] See R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (1901), pp. 85 f. and 96 f., for records of payments both to Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal.

[2] For the political situation in Western Asia, see J. M. Powis Smith, *Zephaniah* ("International Critical Commentary," 1911), pp. 156–65.

On the death of Phraortes his son Cyaxares ascended the throne. Of him it is reported that he was still more warlike than any of his ancestors, and that he was the first who gave organization to an Asiatic army, dividing the troops into companies, and forming distinct bodies of the spearmen, the archers, and the cavalry, who before his time had been mingled in one mass, and confused together. He it was who fought against the Lydians on the occasion when the day was changed suddenly into night, and who brought under his dominion the whole of Asia beyond the Halys. This prince, collecting together all the nations which owned his sway, marched against Nineveh, resolved to avenge his father, and cherishing a hope that he might succeed in taking the town. A battle was fought, in which the Assyrians suffered a defeat, and Cyaxares had already begun the siege of the place, when a numerous horde of Scythians under their king Madyes, son of Protothyes, burst into Asia in pursuit of the Cimmerians, whom they had driven out of Europe, and entered the Median territory. . . . . The Scythians, having thus invaded Media, were opposed by the Medes, who gave them battle, but being defeated, lost their empire. The Scythians became masters of Asia.

After this they marched forward with the design of invading Egypt. When they reached Palestine, however, Psammetichus the Egyptian king met them with gifts and prayers, and prevailed on them to advance no farther. On their return, passing through Ascalon, a city of Syria, the greater part of them went their way without doing any damage; but some few who remained behind pillaged the temple of celestial Venus. . . . .

The dominion of the Scythians over Asia lasted twenty-eight years, during which time their insolence and oppression spread ruin on every side. For besides the regular tribute, they exacted from the several nations additional imposts, which they fixed at pleasure; and further, they scoured the country and plundered every one and whatever they could.[1]

This flood of destruction sweeping down upon the Mediterranean coast-lands naturally spread terror in every direction. The neighboring peoples were panic

[1] Herodotus *History* i. 103–6; translation by George Rawlinson.

stricken. To this general state of fear, Judah would not be an exception. The tidings of the Scythians would outrun their progress; and for weeks, perhaps months, in advance the population would be living in dread. Under these conditions, two prophets came forward as interpreters of the religious meaning of the situation, viz., Zephaniah and Jeremiah. It was a time of political and spiritual crisis, and they sprang to the task of opening the eyes of the people to its significance; as prophets they could not keep silent. The situation itself constituted their call.

Zephaniah seems to have been a citizen of Jerusalem, if we may so judge from the fact of his knowledge of the topography of that city[1] and of the religious and social situation therein, and the further fact that he seems to speak of himself as living in Jerusalem in 1:4. He may also have been connected with the royal family by blood, as seems to be implied by the superscription when it names Hezekiah as the father of Zephaniah's grandfather. He lacks that sense of intimate fellowship with the poor that belongs naturally to a poor man. His point of view is rather that of the aristocrat.

Zephaniah looked upon the coming Scythian invasion of Palestine as the advance guard of the great Day of Yahweh. This awful Day was to bring destruction sweeping over the entire civilized world from north to south. Assyria, the Canaanitish nations, Judah, Egypt, and Ethiopia, were all to meet their doom. The terrors of that great and terrible Day dominated the prophet's mind:

Near at hand is Yahweh's great day, near and speeding fast;
Near at hand is Yahweh's bitter day, hastening faster than a warrior.

[1] Zeph. 1:10, 11.

A day of wrath is that day; a day of distress and gloom;
A day of clouds and eclipse; a day of the trumpet and battle-cry,
Against the fortified cities and against the high towers.
And I shall press hard upon mankind and they will walk like blind men, because they have sinned against me;
And their blood will be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.
Neither their silver nor their gold can deliver them;[1]
For a complete destruction, yea, a fearful one, will Yahweh make of all the inhabitants of the land.[2]

The sins of Judah denounced by Zephaniah are made responsible for the coming destruction. At the forefront of the line of offenses stand sins against Yahweh himself. These include the worship of the Baalim, sun-worship, idolatry, the worship of foreign gods, and utter apostasy from Yahweh. The picture here given of the religious situation accords fully with what we are told in Kings of the period of reaction under Manasseh and Amon. This condition, of course, persisted during the minority of Josiah, and was probably not cleaned up until the time of the Deuteronomic reform in Josiah's eighteenth year (621 B.C.). To these sins against God, Zephaniah adds social injustice of the rich, perversion of right by the judges, the importation of foreign styles of dress, the deceit and lying of the prophets, the irreligion of the priests, and the moral atheism of those who said that it was of no use to worship Yahweh since he exercised no interest in nor influence upon human affairs.

Zephaniah brought nothing new to the solution of the problems of his day. He was but echoing the message of his predecessors. He did not put into that message the

[1] Vs. 18*b* is omitted here as a probable gloss; see *Commentary*, *ad loc.*

[2] Zeph. 1:14–18.

moral idealism and passion that had characterized Amos and Isaiah. He is principally concerned with the description of a certain fiery form of judgment that he sees about to descend upon the world in general and his own nation in particular. He has nothing constructive to contribute to the upbuilding of his nation's life. He is a destructive critic pure and simple. He is not stirred by any profound sympathy for the peoples about to be destroyed, nor even for his own doomed nation. He does not stress the ethical element in the coming judgment; it is rather a punishment sent by Yahweh upon a wicked world that does not recognize his power. The preaching of Zephaniah must have helped prepare the soil of Judah for the great change wrought by the Deuteronomic reform. But so far as any records go, Zephaniah was little more than a voice crying in the wilderness: "Prepare for the day of Yahweh."[1]

Called forth apparently by the same crisis in his people's history, the prophet Jeremiah began his work.[2] This background of the initial period of his preaching shines through the content of Jeremiah's call to the prophetic office. Jeremiah felt that he was foreordained to the task of prophet, but he shrank from it. That he, a mere lad, should presume to rebuke nations seemed to him unfitting. But he was assured that the authority of Yahweh's commission and sustaining presence would more than compensate for his youth. If it seems strange to us that Jeremiah should feel himself concerned with the fate of

[1] For a more detailed treatment of Zephaniah, see J. M. Powis Smith, *Zephaniah* ("International Critical Commentary," 1911).

[2] See Jer. 1:2. The best English books on Jeremiah are J. Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion* (1923); A. S. Peake, *Jeremiah* (New Century Bible, 1910); L. E. Binns, *Jeremiah* ("Westminster Commentary," 1919); G. Adam Smith, *Jeremiah* (1924).

nations, let us remember not only that Zephaniah, his contemporary, likewise dealt with the fate of Assyria and Ethiopia, but also that the affairs of Judah in these closing years of her national history were closely intertwined with the course of affairs in Western Asia and Egypt. If Jeremiah knew anything of the recent history of his nation, he must have known of the invasions of the west and of Egypt by Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal. That knowledge would open his eyes to the fact that the future of Judah was part and parcel of the future of Western Asia as a whole.

Two additional visions seem to have been involved in the call experience of Jeremiah. In one he saw the branch of an almond tree and was assured that this was a symbol of Yahweh's solicitude for the fulfilment of his predictions.[1] This was an assurance to the prophet that he might safely trust Yahweh to see to it that the course of history should conform to Jeremiah's predictions. The second vision[2] presents to the eye of the prophet a boiling pot, with its "face" turned southward.[3] The meaning is that just as the boiling contents of the pot pour out upon the south, so is Yahweh going to stir up the peoples of the north and send them down south, carrying fire and sword even up to the gates of Jerusalem. This destruction

[1] Jer. 1:11, 12. The point of this vision escapes the English reader. The words for "almond tree" (*shâked*) and "watch over" (*shôked*) are almost identical in form and sound, so that the Hebrew text furnishes a play on words.

[2] Jer. 1:13–19.

[3] The Hebrew phrase in vs. 13 is difficult "from the north." It may be noted, however that the form of the word "north" used here is used again in vs. 15, where it has not the customary sense of direction or motion toward some point. If the ending of "north" be likewise ignored in vs. 13, the sense is clear enough.

is sent as a punishment for the wickedness of Judah in that people have worshiped other gods than Yahweh and have turned aside to idol worship. Jeremiah is urged to speak this message, harsh though it be, in its entirety to Judah and is assured that Yahweh's support will sustain him against all the hostility of his fellow-countrymen. It would seem that these visions reflect a more or less extended period of hesitation and fear on the part of Jeremiah before he could make up his mind to undertake so terrible a mission. The prophet conceives of his task in much the same terms as his contemporary Zephaniah had done. The present text of verse 10 contains the words "to build and to plant" as a part of the call. But these words are lacking in the Alexandrine Codex of the Septuagint. They are not in keeping with Jer. 28:8, 9, and they do not easily lend themselves to the situation when the threatening Scythian flood was likely to sweep everything before it. The probability is that in his initial experience Jeremiah saw nothing but an overwhelming disaster impending upon his world.

The oracles uttered by Jeremiah prior to and under the immediate influence of the Scythian invasion are contained in Jeremiah, chapters 1–6. These chapters were edited later in Jeremiah's career,[1] and also supplemented by later hands. Thus they doubtless lost some of the marks of their earlier origin and were made to apply more closely to the events of the years after the Scythian invasion had passed into history. The content of the early preaching of Jeremiah was very much like that of Zephaniah. The sins of Judah were held responsible by him for the coming of the threatened desolation. Those sins were

[1] See Jer. 36:18, 28.

apostasy from Yahweh and ingratitude for all his blessings. Jeremiah put this in very vivid and forceful terms:

> Has a nation changed gods, though they are not gods?
> Yet my people has changed its glory for what is useless!
> Be amazed, O heavens, at this, and be shocked beyond words!
> It is Yahweh's oracle.
> For my people have wrought two evils;
> They have forsaken me, a fountain of living waters,
> To hew out for themselves cisterns,
> Broken cisterns which hold no water.[1]

These gods after whom Judah went astray were, in part at least, her old loves, the Baalim. They were worshiped in the form of images of wood and stone; and they were great in numbers:

> For as many in number as your cities are your gods, O Judah![2]

The people doubtless saw no inconsistency in worshiping local gods alongside of Yahweh, the national God. But Jeremiah brought the wide departure from the worship of Yahweh clearly into view by pointing to their worship in the valley,[3] which in all probability was some reactionary cult like the sacrifice of infants or some other pagan practice continuing from the days of Manasseh and Amon. This recognition and cultivation of non-Hebraic religious practices was part and parcel of the political policy denounced by Jeremiah. He protested against any dealings with Assyria or Egypt as worse than futile (Jer. 2:18, 36). The policy of seeking support from one of the great powers against aggression by the other had long been adopted in Judah, and had been obnoxious to all the prophets. The reason for that was twofold. Such a policy grew out of a lack of an adequate faith in Yahweh and re-

[1] Jer. 2:11—13. [2] Jer. 2:28. [3] Jer. 2:23.

flected unfavorably upon Yahweh. The prophets believed that Yahweh was able to take care of all the interests of his people and needed no extraneous support. Not only so, but policies of alliance with other nations involved more or less formal and official recognition of the gods of the allied peoples. This was naturally offensive in the highest degree to every genuine Yahweh prophet. Jeremiah conceived of the people when disaster should befall them as waking up to their iniquity and as making a plea to Yahweh for forgiveness. But with their facile and shallow penitence he contrasted the true penitence that Yahweh desired:

> But thus says Yahweh to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem:
> "Plough up for yourselves new ground,
> And do not sow among thorns.
> Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh, and put away the foreskin of your hearts,
> O men of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem,
> Lest my wrath go forth like fire and burn,
> And there be no one to extinguish it, because of the wickedness of your deeds."[1]

In chapters 4–6 of Jeremiah are found the Scythian songs. These were evidently called forth by the close proximity of the peril which Jeremiah foresaw. The preaching of this destruction brought agony to Jeremiah's spirit. This was what he had shrunk from when he felt the urge to become a prophet. Now his whole soul revolted from the burden of woe that he had to put upon his people's hearts.[2] He seems to have left his native place, Anathoth, and to have taken up residence in Jerusalem during the period of the Scythian peril. The fifth and

[1] Jer. 3:19—4:4. [2] Jer. 4:10, 19 f.

sixth chapters were apparently spoken in the capital city. The danger seems to have come nearer in the course of these songs. In 4:5, 6, the summons goes forth to flee into the strong cities and to take refuge in Jerusalem; in 6:1 f. the inhabitants of Jerusalem itself are called upon to flee. The songs are largely concerned with the description of the approaching enemy and of the destruction which he is to commit on all sides:

> Behold, a people is coming from the north country,
> And a great nation is aroused from the ends of the earth.
> They lay hold of the bow and spear;
> Cruel are they and show no mercy.
> The sound of them is like the roar of the sea and upon horses they ride,
> Arrayed, like a man, for battle against thee, O daughter of Zion.
> We have heard the report of him; our hands relax.
> Pain has seized us, anguish like that of a woman in travail.
> Do not go forth to the field, and do not walk in the road;
> For there is the sword of the foe, terror on every hand.
> O daughter of my people, gird on sackcloth, and bestrew yourself with dust;
> Make you lamentation as for an only son, bitter mourning;
> For suddenly will the destroyer come upon us.[1]

The sins that have brought on this disaster are enumerated in 5:1–8, 23–31, and in 6:13–17. In the prophet's judgment the corruption of the people was widespread and universal; there was not a decent man in Jerusalem. They were all guilty of perversion of justice, false swearing or perjury, the worship of foreign gods, and apparently of gross sensuality. Whether the language of 5:7 and 8 refers to actual sexual adultery and the like is not wholly clear; it may be that the prophet is likening the loyalty

[1] Jer. 6:22–26.

of the people divided between Yahweh and the other gods to the conduct of men who are disloyal to their wives. However, the foreign-cultus practices were not free from such literal sins against the moral order as are here denounced; and the charge of apostasy from Yahweh would also involve the sin of sexual promiscuity.

In addition to the cultus irregularities, the rich men are upbraided for the illegal and unrighteous ways in which they have gained their wealth:

For rascals are found among my people,[1]
As a cage is full of birds, so their houses are full of graft;
So they become great and wax rich.
They are fat; they plan bad things.[2]
They do not justly judge the case of the fatherless, but they prosper,
And justice to the needy they do not decree.[3]

The sin of covetousness is charged against all classes, rich and poor. The religious leaders are blamed for double dealing and for a too easy solution of national problems. They are all eager for new and untrodden ways and stubbornly refuse to abide by the old standards. Therefore their ritual of sacrifice cannot be accepted by Yahweh and punishment is inevitable.

As a matter of fact, the Scythian invasion passed away and left the world-order essentially unchanged. It was simply a plundering raid by a horde of nomads. It probably inflicted relatively little damage on Judah and Jerusalem, nestling in their protective hills. It certainly did not lay Jerusalem in the dust. The eyes of the Scyth-

[1] The text here is untranslatable.

[2] The text here is bad; see the commentaries.

[3] Jer. 5:26–28.

ians were fixed on bigger game. The terrible pictures of destruction imagined by Zephaniah and Jeremiah were not realized. They were in the eyes of their contemporaries branded as false prophets. Of Zephaniah's history after the completion of his prophetic work, nothing is known. But Jeremiah lived to prophesy another day. The failure of the Scythians to measure up to Jeremiah's expectations was a heavy blow to him. It cost him the confidence of his people. He lost prestige as a prophet. His prophetic reputation was ruined. This may have been the reason why Jeremiah was not consulted as to the acceptance of the Deuteronomic law. Instead of him, an otherwise unknown prophetess, named Huldah, was asked to pass upon the new code.[1] It is hardly possible that Jeremiah should have been ignored, if he had not been under a cloud. The discovery of the new law in 621 B.C. was too near the recent Scythian invasion for either the people or the government to have forgotten Jeremiah's prophecies regarding it. But the effect upon the public was in a real sense less important than the effect upon Jeremiah himself. His youth had caused him to shrink from entering upon the task of prophecy. And now his worst fears were realized! Such a disillusionment must have been a hard trial for the young prophet's faith. Had he been mistaken in supposing that he was called of God to prophesy? Was he properly equipped and qualified to be an interpreter of the divine will? Dare he ever trust himself again to speak as a representative of Yahweh? Had he not been repudiated by his God in the eyes of all the people? It was a stunning experience for a young man just entering upon the exercise of his prophetic gifts. That

[1] II Kings 22:12–20.

he felt the full force of the blow seems clear from the fact that he lapsed into silence after the Scythian invasion for a period of about fourteen years. The Deuteronomic reform in 621 B.C. did not stir him to utterance, nor did the downfall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. call him forth from his retirement. During this period of quiescence the prophet had ample leisure to indulge in self-examination and in meditation upon the course of events. When he reemerged into public life, it was as a mature man in possession of all his powers, with his spirit chastened, and with strength and courage renewed, ready to enter upon the hardest of tasks.

The effect of the Scythian invasion and of the preaching of Zephaniah and Jeremiah was not wholly lost upon Judah. It is no more than reasonable to suppose that the Deuteronomic reform of 621 B.C. was, at least in part, due to the influence of recent events. The promoters of the reform recognized that the time was ripe for their movement. The Scythian invasion had, at least, given Judah a good scare. The preaching of the two prophets had forced them to think upon their ways. The invasion of Sennacherib had prepared the way for such a reform movement. The Assyrians had devastated forty-six cities of Judah and the outlying villages and small towns and had desecrated their shrines. The Temple at Jerusalem was the only one that had escaped. The inevitable conclusion in the minds of the faithful would be that Yahweh had thereby shown his attitude toward the local shrines, on the one hand, and to Jerusalem, on the other. This experience was recent enough to be familiar to the people's minds. The reform movement may thus be looked upon as the resultant of the joint influences of the As-

syrian and Scythian movements and the interpretation of the latter by the two leading prophets of the day. The new elements in the Deuteronomic legislation were three: (1) the sharp differentiation between the clergy and the laity made in the limitation of the priesthood to the Levitical group; (2) the centralization of all lawful worship at the Temple in Jerusalem; (3) the larger recognition given to humanitarian questions in the Deuteronomic code. Whether Jeremiah took any part in or attitude toward this reform is a matter for debate. The possible allusions to it in the Book of Jeremiah are but two, viz., Jer. 11:1–8 and 8:8. It is strange that so slight reference should be made to it, whether Jeremiah supported or opposed the reform. It is probable that Jeremiah was not sure enough of himself, on the one hand, and not sufficiently trusted by the people, on the other, to take any public attitude at this time, so soon after the Scythian songs had been refuted by facts.[1]

Certain social consequences of the reform may be briefly noted. The priesthood at Jerusalem was at once confronted by the danger involved in an increase of power and the arrogance accompanying their segregated and exclusive position. They were now the sole guardians of the sacred ordinances. They became ecclesiastical aristocrats. The centralization of all public worship at Jerusalem involved more or less secularization of rural life. In communities far removed from Jerusalem, it was out of the question to be running up to Jerusalem frequently for religious purposes. Naturally, those functions which had been a matter of common occurrence when the altar

[1] For a contrary view, see J. Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion* (1922), pp. 89–107.

was within a few hundred yards of the home fell into disuse when the distance to the shrine extended to mile after mile. The religious side of life must necessarily be less conspicuously in evidence. On the other hand, the deprivation of the opportunity and the facilities for frequent acts of public worship with its official ceremonies became a challenge to the truly religious spirit. It forced upon the people a greater degree of spiritual inwardness, and to those susceptible to such a type of life it opened wide the doors for meditation and prayer. This was a very real preparation for the experiences of exile which were to come upon Judah and force her to dispense with the altar and external ritual for some time. The people of Judah were thus given a chance to accustom themselves to communion with a God who "dwelleth not in houses made with hands."

In other ways the centralization of worship had great influence. The necessity of making all sacrifices at Jerusalem brought with it economic changes. Few men would take a solitary sheep or ox to Jerusalem for sacrificial purposes. A regular business of providing sacrificial animals would grow up. We recall that Jesus drove the money-changers out of the Temple. The regular trips to Jerusalem would tend to break down in some measure the provincialism of the people. Men from different regions of the country would meet and exchange views and information. Such meetings would make the people in general more intelligent as to their own country and their own people and would give them some knowledge of the outside world. But the women of the household would not reap these advantages, directly, at least. They would be the ones to stay at home and look after the children

and the live stock. The women in any civilization are the natural conservers of things religious. But these women would have no chance to enlarge their outlook. They would keep on thinking the old thoughts and practicing the old customs. Thus the path of progress would be made difficult, and the work of prophets like Jeremiah become correspondingly harder.

CHAPTER VIII

VENGEANCE AND FAITH

Recently an Assyrian document in the British Museum has been brought to light which makes necessary a revision of accepted opinions with reference to the fall of Nineveh.[1] Heretofore that event has been placed at 607 or 606 B.C. The new evidence shows that it took place in 612 B.C. It also appears that the downfall of Nineveh was not the complete end of the Assyrian Empire, but that the Assyrians retired from Nineveh and set up headquarters in Harran. Furthermore, Pharaoh Necho was not hastening to seize the territory of the fallen Assyrian Empire in 608 B.C. when Josiah met him at Megiddo, but was marching to the support of Assyria against victorious Babylon.[2] It is doubtful whether there was any battle at Megiddo between Josiah's forces and those of Pharaoh Necho; the biblical narrative in II Kings 23:29 simply says that Josiah "went up to meet him, and he killed him as soon as he saw him." It is quite possible that Necho, on his way to the aid of Assyria and desiring to make sure that no foe should arise behind him, sent for Josiah to make sure of his attitude toward Egypt, and, not finding it to his liking, proceeded to make assurance doubly sure by putting Josiah to death. Therefore, the people placed Jehoahaz upon the vacant throne; but Necho dethroned

[1] See C. J. Gadd, *The Fall of Nineveh* (1923).

[2] II Kings 23:29 in the Authorized Version is mistaken in saying that Pharaoh Necho "went up against the king of Assyria."

him and held him in captivity at Riblah on the Orontes River, making Jehoiakim king in his stead,[1] and placing him under heavy tribute. But Necho, in turn, reached the end of his rope. In 605 B.C., Nebuchadrezzar, of Babylon, overthrew him at Carchemish and became at once master of all Western Asia. These great events were making their impression upon the minds of the prophets, viz., Jeremiah, Nahum, and Habakkuk. The words of the last two of these we shall study in this chapter.

The prophet Nahum spoke apparently just before the downfall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. at the hands of the Babylonians and Medes. Nothing is known of him, his family connections, or his home.[2] He is simply a voice speaking out of the dark. His significance lies in the fact that he is a good representative of what must have been a fairly common state of mind in Judah when the course of events pointed toward the impending fall of Nineveh. Assyria had long been the taskmaster of the oriental world. The Assyrian kings had enforced their will ruthlessly with fire and sword. They had spoiled one capital after another, and had laid so heavy a tribute upon the peoples as to bleed the vassal countries white. Word of the approaching overthrow of the oppressor would be a gospel of glad tidings at every vassal court.

Nahum exults over the coming disaster, not merely as a good patriot, but also as a loyal follower of Yahweh. The continued dominance of wicked Assyria over the people of Yahweh had been a severe trial of faith to those who were believers in Yahweh's love for Judah. The fall

[1] II Kings 23:30–35.

[2] See J. M. Powis Smith, *Nahum* ("International Critical Commentary," 1911).

of Nineveh presented itself to many of them as a vindication of the justice of Yahweh and also as a richly deserved fate for the oppressing tyrant. It was much easier to believe in Yahweh with Assyria prostrate in the dust than with the Assyrian lion rampant and destroying on every hand. Out of such feelings of relief and satisfaction as these Nahum sang his paean of exulting joy:

Did not one come forth from you devising evil against Yahweh,
counselling wickedness?
Yahweh has commanded regarding you, "There shall be sown of
your name no longer;
From the house of your gods, I will cut off the graven and the
molten image;
I will make your grave a dishonor."
A shatterer comes up against you; keep the rampart;
Watch the road; brace your loins; strengthen your might to the
utmost.

The shield of his warriors is reddened; the mighty men are clothed
in scarlet.
They will prepare the chariots on that day; the chargers will
tremble.
In the fields chariots rage to and fro; they run about in the open
places.
Their appearance resembles torches; they dart about like lightning.
He summons his nobles; they take command of their divisions (?),
They hasten to the wall and the battering-ram (?) is set up.

The gates of the river are opened, and the palace melts away.
And . . . .[1] and her maidens are moaning,
Like the voice of doves, beating upon their breasts.
And Nineveh—like a pool of water are her defenders, and as they
flee,
"Stand fast, stand fast," one cries, but no one turns back.
"Plunder silver, plunder gold; for there is no end to the supplies."

[1]Hebrew *Huzzab* is unintelligible.

There is emptiness and void and waste, and a melting heart and staggering knees.
And anguish is in all loins and the faces of all of them become livid.
Where is the den of lions and the cave of the young lions,
Whither the lion went to enter, the lion's cub, with none to disturb;
Where the lion tore prey sufficient for his cubs and rended for his lionesses,
And filled his dens with prey and his lair with booty?

Behold I am against you; it is the oracle of Yahweh of hosts.
And I will burn up chariots with smoke, and the sword will devour your young lions.
And I will cut off your booty from the land, and the voice of your messengers will be heard no more.[1]

Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between Nahum and Jeremiah in their attitudes toward the fall of Nineveh. Jeremiah, brooding over the sins of Israel and mindful of the mistake he had made in regard to the Scythians, had nothing to say upon the subject of Assyria's overthrow. Nineveh's fall started no note of praise or gratitude from his lips. And yet Jeremiah had felt himself called to be a prophet to the nations. But he was crushed for the time being by the burden of his own sorrow. Nahum, on the other hand, bursts into jubilant song at the prospect of the speedy end of his people's foe. This was what he and the masses of the people had longed for ardently. This meant relief for Judah and vindication for Judah's God. Patriotism and religion both found complete satisfaction in the contemplation of such a prospect for the great enemy of God and man. The most vivid and forceful expression of Nahum's joy is found in his picture of the imminent and inevitable end.

[1] Nah. 1:11, 14; 2:2, 4–14. Nah. 1:1–10, 12 f. and 2:1, 3 are later additions to the book; see *Commentary, ad loc.*

Oh city, bloody throughout, full of lies and spoil; plunder ceases not!
The crack of the whip and the noise of the rumbling wheel and the galloping horse,
And the jolting chariot and the rearing horsemen.
And the flash of the sword and the glitter of the spear, and a multitude of slain;
And a mass of bodies, and no end to the carcasses;
Because of the many harlotries of a harlot of goodly favor and mistress of enchantments,
Who betrays nations by her harlotries and clans by her enchantments.

Behold I am against you, it is the oracle of Yahweh of hosts, and I will lay back your skirts upon your face;
And I will show nations your nakedness and kingdoms your shame.
And I will cast loathsome things on you and render you contemptible and make you a sight,
So that whosoever may see you will flee from you,
And say, "Nineveh is destroyed; who mourns for her?
Whence shall I seek comforters for her?"

Are you better than No-Amon that sat by the great Nile,
Whose rampart was a sea, whose wall was water?
Ethiopia was her strength; Put and the Libyans were her help.
Yet even she was for exile and went into captivity.
Even her infants were dashed in pieces at the head of every street.
And upon her nobles they cast lots and all her great men were bound in fetters.[1]
You too will be drunken, you will be faint,
You will seek refuge from the foe.
All your fortresses are fig-trees, your people are first-ripe figs;
If they be shaken, they will fall into the mouth of the eater.
Behold, women are in the midst of you, fire has devoured your bars;
To your enemies the gates of your land are opened wide.

[1] No-Amon, i.e. Thebes, was captured by Ashurbanipal, of Assyria, in 666 B.C.

Draw you water for the siege; strengthen your forts.
Enter into the mire, and trample the clay; lay hold of the brick-mold.
There fire will devour you, the sword will cut you off.
Multiply yourself like the locust; multiply yourself like the locust-swarm.
Increase your merchants more than the stars of the heavens,
Your sacred officials (?) like the locust-swarm, and your scribes (?) like the locusts,
That encamp in the walls in the cool of the day.
The sun arises and they flee; their place is not known.

How your shepherds slumber, your nobles sleep!
Your people are scattered upon the mountains, with none to gather them.
There is no healing for your wound; your hurt is incurable:
All who hear the report of you will clap their hands.[1]

A little later than the fall of Nineveh, the complete overthrow of Assyria and the rise to supreme power of Babylonia occurred. In 605 B.C., Nebuchadrezzar, of Babylonia, met Pharaoh Necho, Assyria's ally, at Carchemish and put him to rout. From that moment, Nebuchadrezzar was master of Western Asia. In connection with that event, the prophet Habakkuk freed his mind of a great problem.[2] Nothing is known of the man Habakkuk; it is not clear even whether he was the original prophet or whether he was but the editor of the present book. But

[1] Nah. 3:1–19.

[2] B. Duhm, *Das Buch Habakuk* (1906), proposed to place this prophet as a contemporary of Alexander the Great and to regard the entire book as a unit coming from that period. He is now followed by Nowack, *Die kleinen Propheten* (3d ed., 1922), and Ernst Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch* (1922). But this treatment of the text rests upon two wholly conjectural textual emendations and presupposes a unity which it is hard to find; cf. Hölscher, *Die Propheten* (1914), pp. 442 f.

we shall attach the content of the original prophecy to his name.

The prophet complains to Yahweh that wickedness is running riot everywhere in the land. Robbery and violence are prevalent. Law and justice are set at naught. The wicked get the better of the righteous and the righteous are without recourse. Yahweh has seen and known this state of affairs, and yet fails to take action and deliver the righteous from his troubles. The prophet has long protested to Yahweh regarding this iniquitous state of affairs; but his protest has been unheeded.[1] These conditions are most easily understood as descriptive of the situation within Judah itself. Social injustice in accordance with which the strong plundered the weak was rife in the land. It is the old prophetic message again ringing in our ears.

Yahweh himself now appears as the speaker. He declares that he is about to do an almost incredible thing on the stage of world-history. He is bringing forth the Chaldeans, who will sweep everything before them. These people are thus described in vivid and picturesque language:

For behold I am raising up the Chaldeans, that fierce and hasty nation,
That goes through the broad places of the earth, to seize habitations not its own.
Terrible and frightful is it.
From itself its justice and its dignity proceed.

Swifter than leopards are its horses,
And keener than evening wolves.
And its horsemen come from afar;
They fly, like the vulture hastening to devour.

[1] Hab. 1:2–4.

Wholly for violence does he come.
Yea, he turns not west and east.[1]
And he gathers up captives like the sand.

And he makes sport of kings;
And potentates are a jest to him.
He laughs at every fortress,
And he heaps up earth and takes it.[2]

The ruthless might and unchecked career of the Chaldeans do but complicate the problem of the prophet. It is true that the wicked oppressors in Judah need and deserve punishment. But, after all, the Jews are better than the Chaldeans; and in any case the good Jews are not helped by being made the victims of the violence and plunder of the Chaldeans. How can Yahweh tolerate such proceedings? Is the Chaldean to go on indefinitely defying God and man?[3] Having flung this challenge into the face of God, the prophet represents himself as taking his position upon his watchtower and waiting for the answer that must come.

The answer itself is introduced in the most impressive manner. Yahweh bids the prophet take tablets and write the contents of the vision he is to receive in such large and clear characters that the passer-by may read as he hurries past. Then, with a final assurance that the fulfilment of the vision is not far off and an admonition to the prophet not to become impatient for its realization, the content of the vision is revealed to him:

Behold! swollen, not straight, is his soul in him;
But the righteous will live by reason of his faithfulness.

[1] See George G. V. Stonehouse, *The Book of Habakkuk* (1911), *ad loc.* The Hebrew text here is corrupt.

[2] Hab. 1:6–10.

[3] Hab. 1:13–17. Hab. 1:11, 12 is from the hand of an editor.

The more so when . . . .
A haughty man and he will not abide.[1]

The answer that comes to the prophet is not to be thought of as stopping with verse 4. "Tablets," in the plural, would hardly be needed for the writing of two lines of text. The idiom at the opening of verse 5 seems to bind verse 5 closely to verse 4. The text of verse 5 is badly spoiled, so that as it now stands it yields no satisfactory sense. It is clear, however, that the status and fortune of the "righteous" in verse 4 is contrasted with that of the wicked in verses 5 ff. The following verses are filled with denunciations and threats against the wicked oppressor, and they prophesy his complete overthrow. They have been supplemented by later hands at various points where they reflect the ideas of later times.[2]

The first words of this vision are the most important part of it. They have been made familiar to the Christian world by the use of them in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 10:38; and they were lifted into new life by Luther's use of them as the watchword of his reform movement. But the New Testament rendering and Luther's use of it alike fail to reproduce the exact meaning of the original words. That meaning, of course, grew out of the problem of the prophet as outlined in the previous statement of his difficulty to Yahweh. This prophet, like all his predecessors, believed the formula that piety and prosperity were cause and effect. If a nation or an individual pleased Yahweh

[1] Hab. 2:4, 5.

[2] See the differing opinions of the commentaries on this question. But there is general recognition of vss. 14 and 18–20 as late. The third chapter, as a whole, is a psalm from later times that has been attached to the text of Habakkuk. Note the superscription at the beginning and end.

by the kind of life lived or policy followed, then that nation or individual would prosper; on the other hand, if the conduct of nation or individual were such as to be displeasing to Yahweh, then misfortune would come upon the transgressor. The prophet is puzzled because this view of life does not seem to be in accordance with the facts as he sees them. He has therefore brought his question to Yahweh, from whom in due course he has received the answer:

> Behold, swollen, not upright, is his soul within him:
> But the righteous shall live because of his faithfulness.

This means simply that the Chaldean power is doomed to downfall, because of its internal weakness. That weakness is suggested by two figures, the one of an inflated bubble or bag that must burst, the other of a crooked wall that must fall or beam that will break. The Chaldean power carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction. But the righteous people, that is the Jewish nation, will endure and triumph because of its sound character. The word "faithfulness" here is not mere creedal opinion, or even conviction; it is rather faith in action. It means steadfastness of purpose and act; it is almost equivalent to integrity. What, then, has the answer said? Is it not essentially the same old doctrine, piety will prosper and wickedness will come to ruin? Yes, and no!

The difference between this prophet's affirmation that piety pays and that of his predecessors is that he has pondered over this problem and thought it through. He is not now holding a merely inherited faith. It is a faith that he has agonized over in spirit and has reaffirmed for himself after subjecting it to all the light available. It is a

reasoned faith rather than one that has been placidly accepted without question at the hands of tradition. It is therefore more likely to stand the strains of the future, for it is firmly founded on personal experience.

This contribution from Habakkuk constitutes a new phenomenon in the history of prophecy. Heretofore, the prophets have been content to say, "Thus says Yahweh." They have been nothing if not dogmatic. They have felt assured that they knew the mind of God and were commissioned to interpret it to the nation. But here is something different. This prophet is asking questions. He is daring to call in question a traditional dogma. He is challenging Yahweh to demonstrate the justice of his administration. Previous prophets may have had private questions of this sort which troubled their spirits; but no trace of such doubts had appeared in public expression of their message. This prophet exposes the inner workings of his mind for the benefit of all observers. He has no fears nor scruples as to the legitimacy of his own mental and religious processes. He takes for granted the propriety of the interrogative attitude toward his God. He is seeking for light upon a difficult question and he looks for that light to come from Yahweh, the source of all his light. Thus he furnished to the Scriptures of his race and of the world an illustration and example of the recognition of the right of inquiry and investigation in the field of ethics and religion. Certainly, his search brought him out at the point where he started; but he believed in and exercised the right to question traditional opinions and institutions and to demand of them justification for their existence. He has established for all time the principle that the search for truth is an essentially religious procedure.

This bit of prophecy is an illustration of a familiar truth, viz., that faith is always an achievement, not a mere inheritance. The Hebrews, of the exilic and post-exilic periods at least, had to fight for their faith. It was difficult to believe in Yahweh as the supreme God when Yahweh's people were rapidly losing all place and power in the political world. Was Yahweh not able to protect his own people? If so, why continue to worship him? It was hard to believe in the moral order of the universe when a wicked nation was trampling the people of Yahweh into the dust. It is the glory of Judaism that men like Habakkuk kept faith alive in the hearts of the people during a series of national calamities that might well have crushed the life out of it. The faith of Judaism grew richer and stronger the more severely it was tried.

CHAPTER IX

JEREMIAH AND THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

After the departure of the Scythians, as we have seen, Jeremiah seems to have gone into retirement for a while. During his period of quiescence, great things were happening inside and outside of Judah. In 621 B.C. the Deuteronomic reform had swept over the country, backed by the authority of the good king Josiah. In 612 B.C., Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, had fallen at the hands of the Medes and Babylonians. In 608 B.C. Pharaoh Necho had come to the assistance of the retreating Assyrians who had made their last stand in Harran. On his way through Palestine, Pharaoh had slain Josiah, king of Judah, at Megiddo. Thereupon, the people of Judah had placed Jehoahaz upon the throne in his father's place, only to have Pharaoh Necho put him in prison and set another son of Josiah's upon the vacant throne, changing his name from Eliakim to Jehoiakim. At the same time, Judah was taxed to the extent of ten talents of gold and one hundred talents of silver as a war indemnity to Egypt.[1] In 605–604 B.C., Necho was overthrown at Carchemish by Nebuchadrezzar, the Babylonian, with whom the lordship of the world changed hands. The land of Judah received a new overlord and became subject to Babylon for three years.[2] It is uncertain whether this submission to Babylon followed immediately upon Car-

[1] II Kings 23:29–35. This tribute was the equivalent, roughly speaking, of about two and a quarter millions of dollars.

[2] II Kings 24:1.

chemish or was deferred a few years until Nebuchadrezzar could gather in the fruits of his victory and consolidate his empire. It may well have been that Jehoiakim enjoyed a brief period of independence between the downfall of Necho and the coming of Nebuchadrezzar. In any case, it is safe to say that his final revolt at the end of the three years of submission to Babylon was almost certainly instigated by Egypt.

It is problematical as to when Jeremiah first broke silence after his retirement. The death of Josiah in 608 B.C. must have been a terrific shock to Judah. Josiah was a relatively pious king who had zealously carried out the will of Yahweh as made known to him by priests and prophets. Indeed, he is credited with one of the greatest reform movements ever put through in Judah. According to the generally accepted theories and the faith of the times, his reign should have been crowned with success and glory. But, on the contrary, he was cut off suddenly by the sword of the enemy. This situation surely stirred Jeremiah to utterance. We know Jeremiah's estimate of Josiah to have been favorable. He commended him shortly after his death and contrasted him with his successors.[1] Perhaps this was his first reappearance as prophet. Certainly it showed no lack of courage. Shortly after Jehoiakim's accession, Jeremiah confronted him with this message:

> Do not weep for the dead, nor bemoan him;
> Weep sore for the one who goes away;
> For he will not return again,
> Nor see the land of his birth.

This dismisses summarily any lingering hopes that may have been entertained for the return of Jehoahaz. He has

[1] Jer. 22:1, 10–19.

gone to Egypt to stay there. But Jeremiah went on to pay his respects to Jehoiakim:

Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness,
And his upper rooms by injustice,
Who employs his neighbor without pay,
And does not give him his wages.
The one who says, "I shall build myself a spacious house
And upper rooms that are airy.
And he cuts out windows for it;
And it is paneled with cedar,
And painted in red."

Would you show yourself king in that you excel your father in cedar?
Did he not eat and drink,
And do justice and righteousness?
Then it went well with him.
He judged the cause of the poor and needy.
Then it was well.
"Is not this to know me?" says Yahweh.

For your eyes and heart are on nothing
But unlawful gain,
And upon pouring out innocent blood,
And upon doing oppression and violence.

His final word regarding Jehoiakim, whether spoken at this time or more probably somewhat later, threatens him with disgraceful death. He will die "unwept, unhonored, and unsung." Jeremiah's experience with the Scythians did not teach him caution. He daringly threatened Jehoiakim with violent death and denial of burial.[1] Another version of this prediction given in Jer. 36:20 places it after Jehoiakim had burned the roll of prophecies sent to him by Jeremiah, and adds that Jehoiakim will

[1] Jer. 22:18 f.

have no successor of his own blood to sit upon David's throne. But again history failed Jeremiah, for we are told in II Kings 24:6 that Jehoiakim slept with his fathers and was succeeded by his own son Jehoiachim. The Greek translation of II Chron. 36:8 adds that Jehoiakim "was buried in the tomb with his fathers." This is probably a genuine element of the original narrative preserved by the Chronicler.

The same unshrinking courage was in evidence again when Jeremiah appeared in the Temple court one day and foretold the total destruction of that sacred building. The record of this is found in Jer. 7:1–15 and 26:1–24. We get the content of the message in chapter 7, and its effect upon those who heard it in chapter 26. Jeremiah's message on that occasion was a declaration that the confidence of the people in the protecting power of the Temple in Jerusalem was without any basis in reality. The only guaranty of safety is to be found in true religion, which is not a matter of temple worship but of loyalty to Yahweh and of social justice. Since deeds of real piety are not forthcoming, the Temple at Jerusalem is to suffer the same fate as the temple at Shiloh had undergone in days long past. This announcement aroused great indignation in Jerusalem, and came near costing Jeremiah his life. A mob gathered around him, led by the priests and the prophets, and threatened him with death. The government officials intervened. Jeremiah maintained his position and reminded them that it was dangerous to do violence to the person of a prophet of Yahweh. Thereupon, the people swung over to the side of Jeremiah and supported the officials against the charges of the priests and the conventional prophets. Moreover, some of the elders of the

people remembered the prophecy of Micah and cited his immunity in Hezekiah's time as a precedent for toleration in this case. Not only so, but a prominent leader, Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, took Jeremiah's part and saved him from the fury of the hierarchy.[1]

Shortly after this scene, perhaps, Jeremiah was back in Anathoth, his home village, which he had left some time before in order to take up his residence in Jerusalem. While in Anathoth he discovered a plot among his former neighbors to put him to death. The discovery of this treachery stirred him to the depths and aroused in him fierce resentment. They prohibited him from prophesying on pain of death. He retaliated by prophesying the total annihilation of Anathoth and its people as penalty for their impiety.[2] But this experience seems to have brought about a reaction in his own spirit, so that he was confronted by doubts similar to those that had troubled Habakkuk. In this state of mind he expressed himself thus:

Righteous art thou, O Yahweh, though I complain against thee;
Yet of matters of justice would I talk with thee.
Why is it that the way of the wicked prospers,
And all tricksters are at ease?

Thou didst plant them, yea, they have taken root;
They bear and indeed yield fruit.
Thou art near in their mouth,
But far from their heart.

O Yahweh, thou hast known me; thou seest me;
And thou hast tested my heart with thee.
Drag them out, like sheep to the slaughter,
And dedicate them for the day of carnage.

[1] Jeremiah, chap. 26. [2] Jer. 11:18–23.

How long must the land mourn,
And the herbs of the field wither?
For the wickedness of its inhabitants,
Beasts and birds are consumed.

Verily, with footmen you have run and they have tried you;
Then how will you compete with horses?
And in a peaceful land you are fleeing,
So how will you do in the jungle of the Jordan?[1]

In the last stanza Yahweh brings the prophet up short and sharp. What Jeremiah has suffered thus far is not to be compared with what he has still to bear. If the prophet's thought is faithfully reflected here, he certainly found no solution to his problem. Making the situation go from bad to worse does not clarify its meaning. Even so, Jeremiah was not halted in his course by any fears for the future. He did not wait to see his way clear through his difficulties before going further with his work. He walked by faith and not by sight.

Jeremiah spared no pains to make clear to his people and their rulers the fate that he saw awaiting them. He was fertile in the discovery of ways and means by which to impress his message upon his hearers. In 13:1–11, he relates a story of his going to the banks of the Euphrates and there burying a soiled loin-cloth. After the lapse of some time he makes another journey and digs up the cloth, only to find it ruined. All this is to impress upon the mind of Judah that in Yahweh's sight the people are as filthy and useless as the rotten cloth. This was surely a tremendous expenditure of energy in proportion to the result attained! It is probable, however, that the prophet was reporting here the content of a vision that had passed

[1] Jer. 12:1–5.

before his mind's eye. Jeremiah was certainly susceptible to ecstatic experiences, and in some cases distinctly labels his oracles as having originated in visions, e.g., 1:11 f.; 1:13 f.; 24:1 ff. Further, it is clear in at least one place, viz., 1:9 f., that Jeremiah was giving the content of a vision, even though he does not mention the fact that it was a vision. That seems to have been the case here also. Indeed, the ecstatic experience was probably much more evident in the work of the prophets than we have hitherto supposed.[1] This fact furnishes at least a partial explanation of their unshakable confidence in the correctness of their interpretations of history and current events. From an early period in Jehoiakim's reign, perhaps, comes a group of prophecies in which Jeremiah recognizes the futility of his efforts and foresees the downfall of Judah as punishment for the people's lack of faith in Yahweh.[2] Here we meet the familiar and striking figure of speech first coined by Jeremiah,

> Can the Ethiopian change his skin,
> Or the leopard his spots?
> Then you also may do good,
> Who are trained to do evil.[3]

Other familiar phrases are found in these oracles, e.g.,

> They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly,
> Saying, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace.[4]

[1] See H. W. Hines, "The Prophet as a Mystic," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, XL (1923), 37–71; cf. Hölscher, *Die Propheten* (1914), pp. 243–46, 275 ff.; J. Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion* (1923), pp. 4, 220 f.; and T. H. Robinson, *Prophecy and the Prophets* (1923).

[2] Jer. 13:15–27; 12:7–12; 11:15–17; 8:4—9:1.

[3] Jer. 13:23.

[4] Jer. 8:11.

and

> The harvest is past, the summer is ended,
> And we are not saved.[1]

and again,

> Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?[2]

If we could separate the genuine utterances of Jeremiah from the mass of later material attached to his name, we should doubtless be impressed with the freshness and vigor of his style, even as we are by the courage of his thought.

Jeremiah's oracles against the foreign nations in chapters 25 and 46–51 have given rise to much questioning in recent years. Did Jeremiah concern himself seriously with the fate of the pagan world? Are these oracles characterized by the same spirit, thought, and style as are found elsewhere in Jeremiah's writings?[3] It must be borne in mind that Jeremiah's "call" included the non-Israelitish world in its scope.[4] It is also noticeable that the message to the nations in 25:15 ff. is couched in ecstatic terms. Jeremiah there sees himself in vision receiving the cup of Yahweh's wrath from his hands and proffering it to nation after nation that they may drink. This is, of course, a trance experience rather than a mere parable. But in trance life the seer is always carried beyond the merely real, and is brought into contact with the ideal. There are no limits to the range of the powers of the en-

[1] Jer. 8:20. [2] Jer. 8:22.

[3] The chief opponents of the genuineness of these chapters have been Schwally, *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, VIII (1888), 177 ff.; Smend, *Lehrbuch der alttestamentliche Religionsgeschichte* (1899), pp. 238 f.; Duhm, *Jeremia* (1901), pp. 336 ff.

[4] Jer. 1:10.

tranced. It seems reasonable, therefore, to accept the representation of 25:15 ff. in general and to believe that the prophecies in chapters 46 ff. are at least based upon certain materials of this sort that originated with Jeremiah himself. No man in the last days of Judah could concern himself with national problems and escape constant contact with international questions. The world of the Fertile Crescent and Egypt was a world of constant intrigue. All politics had to be world-politics. No nation any longer was sufficient unto itself. Jeremiah had very strong convictions upon these matters; and naturally, therefore, his prophecies concerned themselves more or less with foreign peoples.[1]

In 605–604 B.C., the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, Jeremiah sent for Baruch, the scribe, and dictated to him the sum and substance of his preaching from the time of his call in 627 B.C., twenty-three years before. Some time afterward, when the roll of sermons was completed, he sent Baruch with the manuscript to read it to the people as they were assembled in the Temple for the celebration of a fast day.[2] One of those who heard this reading reported the matter to a group of the nobles assembled in a neighboring house. They sent for Baruch at once and heard the oracles for themselves. They in turn reported to the king, meanwhile giving Jeremiah and Baruch a chance to go into hiding. The king, too, desired to hear the oracles read, but as they were read roll by roll, Jehoiakim cut the rolls in pieces and tossed them into the fire

[1] The prophecies against foreign nations are defended by Cornill, Giesebrecht, Skinner, Peake, and Sellin; cf. George Adam Smith, *Jeremiah* (1924).

[2] Jer. 36:1–10.

burning in the brazier. Jeremiah, safely hidden from the wrath of the king, thereupon dictated the oracles afresh, and apparently left the new roll in the hands of Baruch. That roll furnished the starting-point for the present Book of Jeremiah.[1] This gave Jeremiah a chance to bring his old oracles against the Scythians up to date by reinterpreting them as applying to the new enemy from the north, viz., the Babylonians. But it also aroused the wrath of Jehoiakim against him and forced him to keep in hiding. About this same time, after the writing of the rolls, Baruch consulted Jeremiah as to his own future. In response to this request, Jeremiah gave Baruch a word of personal assurance to the effect that he need expect no honors nor blessings for himself, for destruction was coming upon the whole land; but at least he could count upon saving his own life. Baruch might well have asked: "What is life worth, with nothing to live upon?" But that was not the spirit that actuated Jeremiah's faithful friend.

At this point we may consider certain undated materials in Jeremiah, chapters 14–20. These chapters reflect a great deal of doubt and grief on Jeremiah's part as he contemplated the approaching fate of his beloved people. They are variously located in Jeremiah's life by interpreters, there being no agreement as to their precise date. They may well have occupied Jeremiah's mind at the time when he was in hiding from the wrathful Jehoiakim. From chapter 14 it appears that a severe drought fell upon the land which caused grievous protests against Yahweh on the part of the populace. Jeremiah felt himself debarred from pleading the cause of Judah with Yahweh, since he knew in his heart of hearts that such prayers

[1] Jer. 36:11–23, 32.

could not be answered because of the faithless and disloyal attitude of the people toward its God.[1] Jeremiah in the form of a conversation with Yahweh, which again may have been an ecstatic experience rather than a literary device, then discussed the work of the prophets in opposition to himself. These men were prophets of prosperity and naturally more acceptable to the people than Jeremiah's prophecies of calamity. But Jeremiah was convinced that they were in the wrong, and did not hesitate to call them liars and deceivers and to threaten them and the land as a whole with famine and sword.[2] The picture of death and desolation is continued in 15:5–9. Jeremiah then gives us a glimpse into his own inner life. He reveals his grief that his calling has brought upon him the curses of his own people. He calls upon Yahweh to avenge him of his persecutors and declares that he suffers solely because he has spoken Yahweh's word.[3] Yahweh rebukes him for his unworthy thoughts and assures him of protection against all his foes.[4] The Jeremiah of this experience is a very human person, subject to the fluctuations of temperament and the gusts of passion that so easily beset us all.[5]

In 18:1–10, we are given a very clear presentation of the view that all predictions made by Yahweh's prophets

[1] Jer. 14:10–12. [2] Jer. 14:13–16.

[3] Jer. 15:10, 11, 15–18. This passage (15:15 f.) is supported by other passages calling down vengeance on Jeremiah's foes, viz., 11:20 f.; 12:3; 17:18; 18:20 ff.; and 20:12. Of these, Duhm leaves to Jeremiah only 11:20; 15:15; and 18:20; Cornill accepts only 11:20–21*a*; 15:15; Peake 12:3*a*; 15:15; 17:18*a*; 20:3 ff., 12; while Giesebrecht and Steuernagel accept them all as genuine.

[4] Jer. 15:10, 11.

[5] Other passages, perhaps from this same period in Jeremiah's life, which reflect his changing moods are Jer. 17:14–17; 18:18–20.

are conditional and not absolute. Just as a potter re-works his lump of clay and makes another vessel out of it, if the first attempt is spoiled on the wheel, so Yahweh changes his purpose with reference to his people when they change their conduct either for good or bad. Looked at in another way, this is equivalent to saying that the purpose of all prediction is to affect the conduct of the people to whom the prophet preaches. If disaster is foretold, it is for the purpose of warning the people from sin; and if blessings are promised, it is to strengthen them in their loyalty to true religion and win them to more faithful service.[1] In this same chapter, Jeremiah's message of destruction as punishment for idolatrous practices stirs up the wrath of his hearers, and they devise evil against him. Of particular interest is the charge they make against him, viz., that he is trying to overthrow established institutions, which by their nature are of the permanent order of the universe.[2] The three types of religious instruction are cited as the unchangeable, enduring things:

> Law will not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the sage, nor word from the prophet.

It is significant that these opponents of Jeremiah did not select more material and tangible institutions of the social and political order as guaranties of permanence, but these pre-eminently spiritual and idealistic and apparently least substantial and enduring elements of the national life. They evidently were not wholly blind.

Jeremiah's repeated Cassandra-like prophecies were not allowed to go unrebuked. On one occasion when he

[1] See J. M. Powis Smith, *The Prophet and His Problems* (1914), chap. iv, "Prophetic Prediction."

[2] Jer. 18:18.

had dramatically predicted the destruction of Jerusalem,[1] he was arrested by Pashur, the priestly chief of the Temple police, and was placed in the stocks, in which uncomfortable situation he had to spend the night. When Pashur released him on the morrow, Jeremiah hurled at him a most terrifying oracle: "Yahweh has not called your name Pashur, but Magor missabib," i.e., "terror-from-every-side."[2] After this bad night, Jeremiah quite naturally was low in spirit. He first protested to Yahweh against his treatment of him and his permitting his foes to harass him, and ended by calling down the curse of God upon them:

Thou didst entice me, O Yahweh, and I yielded.
Thou wast stronger than I and thou didst prevail.
I have become a laughing-stock all day long;
Everybody taunts me.

For whenever I speak, I cry out;
I cry "Violence" and "Destruction."
For the word of Yahweh has become for me
A reproach and a jibe all the day long.

So I said to myself, "I will not remember him,
Nor will I speak any longer in his name."
But he was in my heart like a burning fire,
Shut up within my bones.
And I was tired of enduring,
And was unable.

For I heard the whispers of many, "Terror from every side";
"Announce and we will denounce him,"
All the men of my acquaintance,
Who keep by my side.
"Perchance, he will be snared and we may prevail over him,
And take our vengeance upon him."

[1] Jer. 19:1, 2, 10–12*a*, 14, 15. [2] Jer. 20:1–3.

But Yahweh is with me like a terrible warrior.
Therefore my pursuers will stumble and will not prevail.
They will be thoroughly ashamed for they will not succeed;
Their perpetual disgrace will not be forgotten.[1]

From that height of assurance, Jeremiah fell into the depths of despondency, uttering, in 20:14–18, a curse upon the day of his birth which furnished the suggestion for the similar curse in Job, chapter 3.

Somewhere about 600 B.C. Jehoiakim listened to the voice of the siren and joined the movement of revolt against Nebuchadrezzar. At first, Nebuchadrezzar sent only his vassal kings against Judah, but he finally appeared on the scene himself. Meantime, Jehoiakim had died and been succeeded by his son Jehoiachin. He was forced to surrender himself and his capital, after a siege of three months, to the Babylonians in 597 B.C., and was deported with all the leaders of the population to Babylon.[2] From the earlier days of the siege comes the narrative recorded in Jeremiah, chapter 35. A band of Rechabites had taken refuge in Jerusalem from before the advancing army of Babylonians. Jeremiah went down to the Temple court with them, and there in the sight of the onlooking crowd offered them wine to drink. This they declined, alleging that they were so obligated to do by a vow taken by their founder who had bound his followers to the observance of the simple life of the nomads. Jeremiah at once turned this episode to use against his countrymen by contrasting the faithfulness of the Rechabites to the wish of their founder with the faithlessness of the people of Judah who pay no heed to their obligations of loyalty to Yahweh. Consequently, all of Yah-

[1] Jer. 20:7–11. [2] II Kings, chap. 24.

weh's threats of punishment upon Judah will be fulfilled, while the Rechabites will continue in peace and prosperity forever. What Jeremiah thought of Jehoiachin is plainly stated in Jer. 22:24–30, when he predicted for him permanent exile from his land and the cessation of his dynasty with himself. In fact, Jehoiachin's successor was Zedekiah, his uncle on his father's side.[1]

Shortly after 597 B.C., Jeremiah related another vision that he had received (chap. 24). In this, he likened the people of Judah to two baskets of figs. The exiles in Babylon were like good figs, while the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, left behind by Nebuchadrezzar, were represented by a basket of rotten figs. In this bold fashion, Jeremiah declared that the future of the people of Yahweh was in the hands of the exiles, who in due time would return to their homes, while nothing but ruin and death awaited the people in Jerusalem and Judah. This is noteworthy as Jeremiah's first utterance of hope for a future of his people. It is noteworthy, too, that he conceived of that future as dependent upon the exiles, and not the stay-at-homes. This is a testimony to the practical sense of Jeremiah. He was not prejudiced in favor of the strong and wealthy; he took the part of the poor and helpless when necessary, even as the rest of the prophets had done. But he was keen enough to know that no nation could be built up out of the poorest and weakest of the land.[2] He recognized the necessity of enterprise, ability, and character; and he knew that these qualities were more largely represented among the exiles than among the people left behind. Not only so, but the survivors of the land were apparently unduly puffed up by the fact that

[1] II Kings 24:17. [2] II Kings 24:14–16.

they had escaped exile. They were rejoicing over the escape of Jerusalem from destruction, and were congratulating themselves that Yahweh could be counted upon to defend his city and people. It is not unlikely that they were even blaming the exiles for their misfortune, saying that they were being thus punished for their gross sins and inferring for themselves great piety since they had not been carried away! To such a state of mind Jeremiah's diagnosis of the situation would come with a great shock.

Out of the same recognition of the importance of the exilic group came a letter written to them by Jeremiah shortly after their arrival in Babylonia.[1] In this letter Jeremiah urged upon the exiles the necessity of dismissing from their minds any thought of an early return home, assuring them that the captivity would continue for an extended period of time. Therefore the sensible and the loyal thing to be done was to establish for themselves in Babylonia a normal type of life, making homes for themselves, raising families, and entering fully into the commercial life of the land. It is characteristic of Jeremiah's clear mind that he counseled them to co-operate in every way with the native population, and so in furthering the general prosperity they would be contributing most effectively to their own well-being. He declared that Yahweh had not forsaken them, but that even in Babylonia he would hearken unto them if they sincerely sought him. He was also certain that Yahweh would restore his people to their own land in due time, but he denounced those shallow-minded prophets who had gone with the exiles and were buoying them up with false hopes of a speedy return and so preventing them from taking up seriously

[1] Jeremiah, chap. 29.

the responsibilities of their new situation. This letter seems to have brought a vigorous reply from a leader of the exiled community in the form of a protest to the chief priest in Jerusalem to the effect that it was his official duty to silence a man like Jeremiah by putting him in prison. When this letter was read publicly in Jeremiah's hearing, he branded Shemaiah, its writer, as a rebel against Yahweh, and predicted the extermination of his family.[1]

The same restlessness and unwillingness to accept docilely a condition of continuing vassalage to Babylon were prevalent in Judah and throughout the adjacent regions. Plots and conspiracies were on foot to strike once more for freedom. In the fourth year of Zedekiah, delegates from Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon appeared in Jerusalem to arrange for such a joint uprising. Thereupon Jeremiah felt himself moved to make yokes and bands and to present them to these messengers that they might carry them back to their masters. With these symbols of subjection, he sent also an interpretative message, which was meant quite as much for Zedekiah and his advisers as it was for the conspiring kings, to the effect that the only safe and sane policy for all of Western Asia was to accept the overlordship of Nebuchadrezzar and serve him loyally. This would insure protection and security; any attempt to defy him would mean exile and captivity for those who tried it. Furthermore, in accepting the lordship of Nebuchadrezzar they were conforming to the plan of Yahweh, who had given the peoples of Western Asia into his hands.[2] Jeremiah spared no pains to keep his country from plunging into a suicidal revolt. He pressed his views

[1] Jer. 29:32; cf. vss. 21 f.

[2] Jer. 27:1–11. "Jehoiakim" in 27:1 is an error for "Zedekiah"; see vs. 3.

upon king, priests, and people, declaring that submission to Nebuchadrezzar was the only possible escape from further calamity and destruction.[1]

One of the most powerful groups opposed to Jeremiah at this time consisted of the prophets of his day. These men were unanimously in support of the spirit of revolt. Even after the first deportation they were convinced, both in Babylonia and in Judah, that Yahweh would intervene marvelously and speedily bring his people back home. In chapter 28 is recorded Jeremiah's encounter with a representative of this group in the presence of the priests and the people in the Temple. Jeremiah had gone down to the Temple with a yoke upon his neck, thus symbolizing the necessity of Judah's accepting placidly the yoke of Nebuchadrezzar. Hananiah, the prophet, was preaching a message of hope, declaring that it was Yahweh's plan to restore Judah within at most two years by bringing back the exiles and all the furnishings of the Temple. Jeremiah responded to this by saying that he desired such an outcome as much as anybody else did, but that the people would do well to think a little before accepting such a view. Then turning to Hananiah, he said:

> Hear, now, this word that I speak in your hearing, and in the hearing of all the people: The prophets who were before you and before me in the past prophesied against many countries and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence. But the prophet who prophesies of prosperity—when the word of such a prophet comes to pass, the prophet shall be known, that Yahweh has really sent him.

Thereupon Hananiah countered by taking Jeremiah's yoke and breaking it in the sight of the crowd and saying

[1] Jer. 27:12–22.

that in like manner Yahweh would break the yoke imposed by Babylon.

"And the prophet Jeremiah went his way." He could do nothing else effectively. As a wise man he left the scene. What did he think? Did he perhaps question the validity of his own judgment? After all, perhaps, Hananiah might be in the right? Jeremiah knew too well that he himself was not infallible. Had he really heard the word of Yahweh? But as thoughts like these succeeded one another in his mind, there came to him again with new power the conviction that he, and not Hananiah, had spoken the truth. Later, on the same day, perhaps, he returned to face his opponent and said to him:

> You have broken the wooden yokes,
> But you will make in their stead iron yokes.

Then he turned upon Hananiah himself and predicted his death within the year as punishment for his false prophecy, and within two months Hananiah died. There is no reason to doubt this statement. Cases of such foreknowledge are not unknown, though they are inexplicable. Such a story is more likely to be true than to have been invented. The fact of Hananiah's death was probably too well known to escape mention.

Two things are of special note in the foregoing episode. First, the fact that Jeremiah's statement that the history of prophecy knew of no prophets of prosperity, but that the unbroken tradition of prophecy was the preaching of disaster. Second, the fact that his test of the validity of a prophecy lay simply in the answer to the question as to whether or not it agreed with the trend of prophetic preaching in the past. The past had known only prophets of woe; there had been no heralds of hope.

This statement was unchallenged by Hananiah. Would it not have been a fatal blow to Jeremiah's message if he could have cited such prophecies as Isa. 9:1–17; 11:1–9; Mic. 5:2–6? He and his friends certainly would have known if such prophecies had been extant. Did Jeremiah leave no room for prophecies of hope in the future? He made conformity to the past the test of true prophecy, and his past was a hopeless one. But yet he himself prophesied deliverance when such a message was needed. In his letter to the exiles, as we have seen, he held out the certain hope of a return from exile. He evidently had no intention of laying down a hard and fast law for prophecy. He would leave it free to adjust its message to the needs of the changing generations. In any case, that is what the prophets did.

In spite of Jeremiah's warnings and protests, Zedekiah entered into the revolt against Babylon, and soon found the Babylonian army at his front door. Thereupon he sent messengers to Jeremiah to learn what Yahweh was purposing to do for his people.[1] Jeremiah's answer was to the effect that the city and the king would fall into the hands of Nebuchadrezzar, and that the only salvation for the people was to desert to the Babylonians. At this same time Jeremiah is represented as having assured Zedekiah that he would die in peace and receive honorable burial.[2] As a matter of fact, Zedekiah was blinded by Nebuchadrezzar and carried captive to Babylon.[3] The last sight upon which his eyes rested was the execution of his two sons. Was Jeremiah again mistaken? It is more probable that the narrator of Jeremiah's words failed to give

[1] Jeremiah, chap. 21.

[2] Jer. 34:1–5.

[3] II Kings 25:7; Ezek. 12:13.

his statement the conditional form in which Jeremiah almost certainly made it. It is incredible that Jeremiah should have made such an unconditional promise of safety to Zedekiah after all that Zedekiah had done in violation of the prophet's advice and warning.[1]

In the early course of the siege, an army from Egypt approached to relieve Jerusalem from the Babylonian pressure. Thereupon, the Babylonian army withdrew in order to meet the new foe.[2] Some time earlier in the course of the siege, Zedekiah had issued a decree, with the consent of the slave-owners, granting liberty to all Hebrew slaves. But when the Babylonian army withdrew temporarily, the slave-owners made haste to possess themselves again of their former slaves.[3] At this the anger of Jeremiah blazed forth against these rich and unscrupulous oppressors. He cited the law to them and told them that they and their king would all fall into the hands of the Babylonians who would burn their city with fire.[4] After the departure of the Babylonians, Jeremiah was visited by an embassy from Jehoiakim who wished to know whether or not the Babylonians would return. Jeremiah in the strongest possible terms declared that the Egyptians would retreat in flight and that the Babylonians would renew the siege and retake the city.[5] Thereupon, he sought to leave Jerusalem in order to visit some landed property which he possessed in Benjamin. But he was arrested at the city gate and charged with an attempt to desert to the Babylonians. This he flatly denied, but

[1] See Cornill's discussion of this oracle, where this point is strongly presented.

[2] Jer. 37:5.

[3] Jer. 34:8–11.

[4] Jer. 34:12–22.

[5] Jer. 37:3–10.

in vain; for he was cast into prison by order of the government.[1] There he remained for some time, until Zedekiah sent for him privately and asked once more for a word from Yahweh. Jeremiah told him again that he would be captured by Nebuchadrezzar. Then Jeremiah besought the king for relief from the hard conditions of his imprisonment and obtained permission to be placed in a more airy and spacious prison, where an order was given for his daily food so long as food was left in the city.[2]

About a year before the fall of the city, Jeremiah's faith in the future of his country was put to a severe test. A message was brought to him in prison by his nephew that he was desirous of selling a piece of land in Anathoth; and that, since the right of redemption belonged to Jeremiah as nearest of kin, he was giving Jeremiah the first chance to buy the field. Jeremiah recognized the significance of this occasion and treated it as a word of God to himself. He at once accepted the offer and had the deed prepared in duplicate, properly signed, witnessed, sealed, and filed away. After doing this, Jeremiah seems to have had some doubts about the wisdom of the action. He presented his doubts and fears to Yahweh, and was encouraged by the renewed assurance that after the exile there would be a return and restoration, so that once more fields would be bought and sold in Judah as of old.[3] Had Jeremiah refused this opportunity to demonstrate in this practical way his faith in Yahweh and in the future value of real estate in Judah, his preaching of hope and promises of restoration would have been worse than useless.

[1] Jer. 37:11–15.

[2] Jer. 37:16–21.

[3] Jeremiah, chap. 32.

Worse treatment yet was in store for Jeremiah. The princes and officers strenuously engaged in the defense of the city were of course not pleased by Jeremiah's outspoken advice to the men of the city to desert to the Babylonians. So they protested to Zedekiah against the liberty of speech accorded to Jeremiah, and they obtained authority from the king to do with Jeremiah as they would. Thereupon they cast him into a dungeon in the prison yard in which the mud was deep and where he was without food. When this was reported to Zedekiah by Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian eunuch, the king ordered the Ethiopian to take a guard, pull Jeremiah out of the mire, and let him loose in the prison yard.[1] Soon after, Zedekiah again sent for Jeremiah and held a secret interview with him in which he asked Jeremiah's advice and guaranteed him immunity from attack by the princes of the court. Jeremiah urged upon Zedekiah absolute surrender to Babylon, which would bring him escape from death, and warned him that continuance in resistance would mean utter ruin for himself, the city, and the people. Then the king pledged Jeremiah to silence regarding the real content of the interview, and arranged that he should tell the princes that he had sought an interview with the king in order to plead for better treatment for himself. Jeremiah assented to this, and so reported when the princes questioned him on the matter. Here it is necessary to admit that Jeremiah told a downright lie. The excuse for it, if not the justification, is quite obvious. If Jeremiah had told the truth, he would in all probability have lost his life, and so have been denied the privilege of

[1] Jeremiah did not forget the kindness of Ebed-melech; see Jer. 39: 15–18.

any further service to his country. Not only so, but the princes, who were the real masters of the situation, Zedekiah being a weakling in their hands, would undoubtedly have proceeded to further violent measures and would have done away with or at least dethroned Zedekiah, and have put one of their own party on the throne in his place. This might have added the horrors of civil war to the terrors of the siege. In view of the dread possibilities of telling the truth and the likelihood that the people as a whole would suffer still more than they would under Zedekiah, it is no wonder that Jeremiah concealed the facts.

Finally the city fell. Not until starvation had done its deadly work did its heroic defenders give way. There was no weak surrender, but a stubborn resistance to the bitter end. The Babylonians broke through the wall, seized the city, and caught the fleeing king in the vicinity of Jericho. The fate of city and king is described in Jeremiah, chapter 39. The Babylonians at once released Jeremiah from his prison and put him under the charge of "Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan; so he dwelt among the people."[1] Here he remained in peace for a few months, while many Jews who had fled from their country during the campaign returned home and gathered around Gedaliah, the new governor. Perhaps during this period of relative peace and quiet, Jeremiah produced the greatest utterance accredited to him, the prophecy of the new

[1] Jer. 39:11–14. Another story, of later origin, represents the Babylonians as carrying Jeremiah in chains with the rest of the captives as far as Ramah, where he was released and given the choice of going to Babylon under royal favor or of staying in Judah with the stricken people. Jeremiah chose the latter course, and was sent away with a supply of provisions and a present of money to join Gedaliah, the governor of Judah, appointed by Babylon (Jer. 40:1–6).

covenant.[1] Herein Jeremiah penetrated deeply into the nature of religion, declaring that no external law would control the lives of the children of the coming Kingdom of God, but that Yahweh would write his laws upon the tablets of the hearts of his people, so that they would find themselves under an inner compulsion to walk in the ways of Yahweh. This is the nearest that the Old Testament writers come to the idea of the new birth, or regeneration. It is noteworthy, however, that Jeremiah did not contemplate this as a part of the existing order, but as characteristic of the new Golden Age or Kingdom of God to which he looked forward.

The peace after the surrender was soon broken by partisan strife, murder, and civil war.[2] The survivors of this internecine strife set out to flee into Egypt, being afraid of the vengeance of the Babylonians. But before taking the final step, they consulted Jeremiah and assured him that they would do whatsoever Yahweh should command. After ten days of meditation, Jeremiah reported that it was Yahweh's will that they should stay in Judah where his blessing would rest upon them, but that if they should fly to Egypt they would die by sword, famine, and pestilence.[3] They replied to this that Jeremiah was not speaking Yahweh's word but was serving merely as the mouthpiece of Baruch. Consequently, they defied Jeremiah and fled into Egypt, taking the people with them and forcing Jeremiah to accompany them. Jeremiah upon arrival in Egypt prophesied dramatically that Nebuchadrezzar would conquer Egypt, thus rendering their flight thither utterly futile;[4] and he proceeded to reiterate

[1] Jer. 31:31–34.
[2] Jeremiah, chap. 41.
[3] Jeremiah, chap. 42.
[4] Jeremiah, chap. 43.

against the Jews in Egypt the type of denunciation and threat they had been used to hear from him in Jerusalem.[1]

The last appearance of Jeremiah, of which we have record, is recorded in Jer. 44:15–30. Jeremiah's chief charge against his people from the beginning of his career had been that they were disloyal to Yahweh in that they were worshiping other gods. Indeed, on one occasion he is represented as having said: "According to the number of your cities are your gods, O Israel."[2] One of these many deities was the occasion of this episode. The people protested against Jeremiah's message in denunciation of their worship of other gods, and the women told him that as a matter of fact the country had prospered as long as they had worshiped the "queen of the heavens," but that since they had ceased doing so all manner of misfortune had befallen Judah and its people. Therefore they proposed to continue the worship of the "queen of the heavens" in spite of all he might say.[3] This implies clearly that the Jews had worshiped this goddess of old, probably prior to the Deuteronomic reform, and that the cessation of that worship was a relatively recent thing. What a depth of spiritual darkness in the minds of the masses is revealed by this controversy! To what a high level the prophets were striving to elevate their people! A contemplation of the ignorance, sensuousness, and superstition of the people might well have plunged the prophets into despair. But they were incurably hopeful in the best sense. They never ceased their efforts to educate and free their people from their enthralment to the traditions of the past and to point out to them the better way. Jeremiah responded to this defiant attitude of his people by threatening Jewry in

[1] Jer. 44:1–14. [2] Jer. 2:28. [3] Jer. 44:15–19.

Egypt with the same kind of disaster that had befallen Judah and Jerusalem.[1]

So we leave Jeremiah, an exile in a strange land, surrounded by his own people who have refused to learn anything from their tragic experiences and resent all efforts on his part to teach them. He is a homeless, helpless, solitary soul—an idealist in the midst of a materialistic generation. He has lost everything, property, home, country, and hope—everything but his own soul. He was misunderstood, unappreciated, persecuted, and imprisoned by his contemporaries, only to be taken up by history and given the place of honor in the goodly fellowship of the prophets.

[1] Jer. 44:24–26. The end of chap. 44 predicts the return of a few Jews from Egypt to Judah and the death of Pharaoh-Hophra as a captive in the hands of his foes. Pharaoh's death in 564 B.C. is shrouded in mystery; but these words were written after that event by later editors; see commentaries, *ad loc.*

CHAPTER X

THE FATHER OF JUDAISM

The Book of Ezekiel records the activity of Ezekiel between July, 593 B.C., and April, 571 B.C. The materials constituting the book are for the most part arranged in chronological order, though the last date given in the book is found in 29:17. The book falls naturally into three parts: (1) the prophecies against Judah uttered before 586 B.C., viz., chapters 1–24; (2) the oracles against the foreign nations, viz., chapters 25–32, spoken for the most part between 588 and 586 B.C.; and (3) the promises for the future, viz., chapters 33–48, uttered between 585 and 573 B.C. Ezekiel himself was a priest who was carried captive in 597 B.C. In Babylonia his priestly occupation was gone, but being a profoundly religious man, he could not cease thinking about religion and the problem of the exile; and so he soon found himself functioning as a prophet. But when he became a prophet he did not cease to be a priest in spirit, with the natural result that his prophecy is to a great extent couched in priestly terms and dominated by priestly interests. With all this, there went also a deeply mystical temperament. He was subject to sudden attacks of "the hand of Yahweh."[1] The common expression for a revelation from Yahweh in Ezekiel is "the word of Yahweh came unto me," but in 1:3 it is significant that this expression is supplemented or interpreted by the phrase, "the hand of Yahweh was there upon him."

[1] Ezek. 1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1.

The interpretation of some episodes in Ezekiel's experience is greatly facilitated by an adequate recognition of the place of ecstasy and trance or vision in Ezekiel's prophetic activity.[1]

In terms of such mystical and trancelike states, we may understand the initial vision of chapters 1–3. The extraordinary figure described in chapter 1 is such as never was on land or sea. We have to choose between literary imagination or fiction, on the one hand, and actual vision, on the other. The latter alternative is by all odds the easier, and it saves the moral integrity of Ezekiel. He is not to be looked upon as claiming to have seen and heard things or sounds which, as a matter of fact, he never saw or heard at all. These things were realities to him. In his ecstatic states he actually did see and hear what he reported to his people. The eating of the scroll in 2:9—3:5 is a detail easily understood upon this basis. The dazed condition in which Ezekiel remained for a week after this vision[2] is indicative of a state quite familiar in cases of ecstasy and trance.[3] Similarly, the much-discussed action of the prophet in chapter 4, where he represents himself as ordered to lie upon his right side for three hundred and ninety days[4] and then upon his left side for forty days, is one readily comprehended as

[1] See H. W. Hines, "The Prophet as Mystic," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, XL (1923), 37–71. Cf. H. Wheeler Robinson, "The Psychology and Metaphysic of 'Thus Saith Yahweh,' " *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XLI (1923), 1–15.

[2] Ezek. 3:15.

[3] See Ezek. 3:26; 24:27; 29:21; 33:22, for other cases in Ezekiel's own experience; and cf. H. W. Hines, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

[4] The figure given in the Greek translation is 190. This figure is probably due to the desire of literalists to bring the periods somewhat nearer the range of possibility.

having taken place in a trance. In visionary experiences a day is with the visionary "as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." Most of us can recall dreams into which an incredible amount of activity, or period of time, has been crowded, though they lasted actually but a few seconds.

The account, in chapters 8–11, of Ezekiel's visit to Jerusalem, where he saw all the iniquitous practices going on in the Temple, and of his return through the power of the "spirit"[1] is another narrative that gains immensely in intelligibility if interpreted as the record of a visionary experience. In this vision and in the ones recorded in chapters 37 and 40–48, the passage of the prophet for a longer or shorter distance through the air under the personal direction of "the spirit" is involved. Such trance journeys are not unknown in the experiences of other mystics.[2] The actual content of ideas in these visions is composed of materials upon which the prophet had meditated many days, if not months and years, in his waking hours. The visions brought all of this thought and information to a focus. Through these experiences the prophet was able to gather up and organize much that had been lying around loose in his consciousness, so to speak, for longer or shorter periods. In the white heat of intense preoccupation and emotion he fused these materials into unity, stamped them with the marks of his own personality, and sent them forth as coin of the prophetic realm.

The state of mind among the Babylonian exiles between 597 and 586 B.C. is clearly reflected in Ezekiel's prophecies. We have already seen something of it through Jeremiah's letter to the exiles[3] and through the reaction to

[1] Ezek. 8:3. [2] See H. W. Hines, *op. cit.*, p. 53. [3] Jeremiah, chap. 29.

Jeremiah's message in Babylonia (see pp. 149 f.). The prophets in general, both in Babylonia and in Palestine, fanatically preached a shallow gospel of prosperity.[1] Both groups refused to believe a further destruction of Jerusalem possible. They were skeptical toward Ezekiel's message of destruction and openly scoffed at it.[2] Because further punishment was not immediately inflicted, they derided Ezekiel's threats and jeered at him. Those who still had faith in Yahweh and his power were banking upon the piety of the good people of the past and present to save the country from destruction.[3] The exiles were regarded by the Jews of Jerusalem as outcasts, rejected by Yahweh because of their sins.[4]

Others had been driven by the force of circumstances to doubt Yahweh and to criticize his administration of the moral order. They were victims of the old philosophy of life that the children suffered for the sins of their parents, and they rebelled against it and bitterly resented its injustice.[5] Some were taking refuge from their fears in a recourse to outworn superstitions.[6] Many were turning away from Yahweh and frankly taking up the worship of other gods, hoping thereby to ease their lot.[7]

The nature of Ezekiel's message prior to 586 B.C. was very definitely determined by the state of mind to which we have referred. He saw that the exiles were not as yet ready to accept the evident outcome of the existing situation. They were being buoyed up by false hopes to expect the impossible. He therefore set himself the task of

[1] Ezek. 13:10, 16.
[2] Ezek. 12:21–28.
[3] Ezek. 14:12–20.
[4] Ezek. 11:15 f.
[5] Ezek. 18:1 f., 25, 29; 8:12; 14:22 f.
[6] Ezek. 8:7–14.
[7] Ezek. 6:4–6; 8:16; 14:1 ff.; 20:31 f.

preparing them for what was to come. He kept constantly before them the necessity of the fall of Jerusalem. This was the great burden upon his soul during this period. Over and over again he reverted to it. One vision[1] is wholly devoted to picturing the destruction that is to befall Judah and Jerusalem in the form of pestilence, famine, war, and exile. Another[2] vividly portrays the iniquities going on in Jerusalem, and in the very Temple itself, which make the coming destruction inevitable. In chapter 12, Ezekiel is described as having symbolically represented the fall of Jerusalem by preparing a bundle of clothes and other necessary articles and carrying it forth into the public street for some little distance away from his house. Then in the early evening, he dug through the mud wall of his house and went forth through the opening with his bundle on his back. To the inquiring crowd he made answer the next morning to the effect that his actions had been symbolical of the fate awaiting the king and the people of Jerusalem, who should be forced into exile and captivity. A second picture of the same fate was presented by him as he ate his food in haste and fear and drank water in the same terror-stricken fashion, thus bringing forcefully before the eyes of his people and vividly to their memories tragic experiences through which they themselves had gone, the like of which were yet in store for the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

The task of Ezekiel in opening the eyes of his people to their true situation was made much more difficult by the fact that there were other prophetic leaders who were encouraging the people to believe what they wanted to believe. These religious leaders had a tremendous advan-

[1] Ezek. 3:22—5:17. [2] Ezekiel, chaps. 8–11.

tage over Ezekiel, for they were preaching a popular message.[1] Their message reflected glory upon Yahweh likewise in that its fulfilment would be an evidence of Yahweh's power and love. These prophets could point the finger of scorn at Ezekiel and say that he had no faith in Yahweh and that he was no true patriot. Ezekiel was opposed also by a group of women prophets. These he denounced for certain practices that seem to have been highly superstitious, though their precise significance is not clear.[2] He charged all these false leaders with having been a source of weakness rather than of strength in the great Day of Yahweh that fell upon Jerusalem in the form of the first deportation of 597 B.C. In chapter 14, he again foretold the further destructive punishment and deportation of the population of Jerusalem, adding the curiously ingenious touch which made a few survivors reach Babylonia as awful examples of the wickedness of the population of Jerusalem in general. When the Babylonian Jews should see how wicked these surviving Judean Jews were, they would recognize the justice of Yahweh in treating Jerusalem as he had done. The utter worthlessness of the Jerusalem community is vividly presented in the figurative language in chapter 15.[3]

Ezekiel went beyond all his predecessors in his condemnation of Judah. Earlier prophets had represented Israel as pure and faithful to Yahweh in the days of its youth, but as having gone astray after other gods upon the entry into Canaan. In chapter 16, Ezekiel declared that from birth Israel had been steeped in idolatry, having been born of idolatrous parents—Hittites and Amorites.

[1] Ezek. 13:1–16. [2] Ezek. 13:17–23.

[3] Ezekiel, chap. 22, catalogues the sins of Judah in some detail.

The terrible punishment through which Judah had gone, and the still more terrible that was yet to come, forced Ezekiel to take this point of view. The sin of Judah must be great in proportion to the disastrous punishment inflicted and anticipated. Ezekiel could scarcely find language strong enough to express the guilt of Judah, and he finally did not shrink from saying that Sodom, Gomorrah, and Samaria were not so wicked as Judah had been.[1] It is interesting to note that notwithstanding the terrific arraignment of Judah in this bold figure, yet Ezekiel proceeded at once to lay a foundation for the future. He dared to say that Yahweh would forgive Judah after her sins had been atoned for and she had become penitent, and would restore her to her own land. Not only so, but even Sodom, Gomorrah, and Samaria would be restored and re-established as children under the protection and guidance of Judah. This same note of hope and promise sounds again in Ezek. 20:33–44,[2] where Judah is assured of a restoration, but only after a period of severe chastisement.

In the first half of chapter 20, Ezekiel surveys the history of Israel from the beginning in Egypt, showing how Israel had rebelled against Yahweh in Egypt and been forgiven by him for his name's sake, and how the same experience had been repeated in the desert and again in Canaan itself. In this connection a most extraordinary statement is made by the prophet. He declares that the past legislation of Israel has not been good, that it has commanded them to sacrifice their first-born, and that these evil statutes have been imposed upon them by Yahweh himself "that they might know that I am Yahweh."[3]

[1] Ezekiel, chap. 23, follows the same line of thought as chap. 16.

[2] See also Ezek. 11:17–21; 14:10, 11; 17:22–24. [3] Ezek. 20:23–26.

As a matter of fact, the command to sacrifice the first-born of man does actually appear in the oldest form of the legislation, just as was the case with the first-born of oxen.[1] Later these barbaric customs of the earliest period were softened.[2] Ezekiel, as a priest, knew the history of the ritual and felt the necessity of offering an explanation of the old custom. His apology is startling, indeed. Yahweh ordered the institution of the sacrifice of children in order to punish his people through its operation and bring them to a realization of his power. It should be remembered that Ezekiel was but carrying on a point of view common in earlier days;[3] and also that he and his contemporaries had no Satan to step in and relieve both Yahweh and Israel in part, at least, from the responsibility for sin. In any case, this statute was a part of the "law" and could not be assigned to any other authority than Yahweh himself. It is quite clear that Ezekiel's horror of human sacrifice was so great that he preferred almost anything to the acceptance of it as an institution still in force by divine right.

While preaching unsparingly the necessity of further punishment for Judah and Jerusalem, Ezekiel was not blind to the ethical problem raised in many minds by the conditions of the times. Attention is devoted to it in Ezek. 3:16–21 and 18:1–32. The current discontent was ironically expressed in the saying: "The fathers ate sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge."[4] The meaning, of course, was that the sons were suffering for the sins of their parents. More particularly, the generally

[1] Exod. 22:29*b*, 30; 34:19; cf. 13:12.

[2] Exod. 13:13*b*; 34:20*b*.

[3] See, e.g., II Sam. 24:1 ff., and Exod. 9:12; 10:1. [4] Ezek. 18:2.

accepted explanation of the sufferings of the times was found in the excessively sinful reign of king Manasseh.[1] Yet there was a growing consciousness and conviction that such an administration of the moral order was not fair to the children. Men were saying: "The way of Yahweh is not fair."[2] Jeremiah and Ezekiel alike had been insisting that the sins of their own generation were so atrocious that they did not need to look any farther back than their own day for an explanation of the punishment they were undergoing. Now Ezekiel came to closer grips with the issue. He denied outright the doctrine of the social solidarity of the generations. He maintained firmly that each man should bear the penalty of his own sin and reap the reward of his own righteousness. "He that sins, *he* will die," and "The just, he will surely live."[3] Every man's fate is in his own hands. It is his to live or die as he will. Hence the prophet closes his case with a fervent appeal to his people:

Turn and return from all your transgressions,
That guilt may not be your ruin.
Put away from you all your transgressions wherein you have transgressed,
And make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit;
For wherefore should you die, O house of Israel?
For I have no satisfaction in the death of one who dies;
It is the oracle of the Lord Yahweh.
Therefore, turn yourselves and live.[4]

This is the first clear statement in Hebrew history of the idea that each individual is responsible before God for his own life, and that no one else can determine his fate

[1] II Kings 23:26. [2] Ezek. 18:25, 29.

[3] Ezek. 18:4, 9, 13, 17 f., 20 ff.

[4] Ezek. 18:30–32. Cf. also Ezek. 33:1–20.

for him. Naturally, Ezekiel being the first to formulate this doctrine, and being driven to it by the reaction of his age against the conception of family and group solidarity, overstated his case and pushed it too far.[1] He did not reckon sufficiently with social forces and with heredity, but pulled the individual out of his environment and made him stand or fall by himself alone. This is contrary to all human experience. As a matter of fact, Ezekiel did not drop the social solidarity point of view himself in its entirety. His conception of the future of the people of God was formulated in terms of group life. At least on one occasion he failed to apply his new individualism himself to the situation of his day, and represented righteous and wicked as perishing together.[2] The old solidarity point of view continued to function, as a matter of fact, unto the end of Hebrew national history.

The last oracle against Jerusalem was delivered in January of the year 588 B.C., on the day that the final siege of Jerusalem began.[3] The prophet used the figure of a pot boiling upon the fire. This pot is taken off the fire and removed, after which it is placed over the flames again and burned clean of its scum and filth. Thus the prophet sought to show that the exiles had been removed and placed out of danger, while the present population of Jerusalem was destined to undergo further punishment in the doomed city. In the same chapter we find the account of the death of Ezekiel's wife and the use he made of that tragic experience. Feeling himself called upon by Yahweh

[1] See J. M. Powis Smith, *The Prophet and His Problems* (1914), chap. vii; cf. M. Löhr, *Sozialismus und Individualismus im Alten Testament* (1906); H. Gunkel, in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Vol. III (1912).

[2] Ezekiel, chap. 5.

[3] Ezek. 24:1 f.

to make this event an occasion for an object-lesson to his people, he accepted the death in silence, ignored all the customary procedure on such occasions, and so aroused the curious questions of his neighbors as to what he meant by such unheard-of conduct. He turns upon them with the interpretation that they will act in like manner when the news of the downfall of their beloved capital shall reach them. They will be too dazed and overcome with horror to go through with the petty little ceremonies of conventional mourning. Their grief will be past all power of expression and utterly inconsolable.

The next section of Ezekiel's book concerns himself with the oracles against the foreign nations. The peoples denounced are Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia;[1] Tyre and Sidon;[2] and Egypt.[3] These prophecies fall for the most part into the period between 588 and 585 B.C. The prophecies are motivated by a desire for the punishment of those who have gloated over the troubles and disasters of Judah. They reflect the conviction that Babylon is to dominate the civilized world. They gloat over the downfall of Egypt, which is represented as cast down to Sheol where she is surrounded by the lesser peoples, Assyria, Elam, Meshech, Tubal, Edom, and Sidon. They give a most detailed and informing description of the world-wide commercial activity of Tyre.[4] Edom calls forth the bitter hatred of the prophet, who gives Israel the promise of wreaking vengeance upon Edom with her own hands. Israel itself is entitled to hope for a future return to its own land.[5] Perhaps most significant of all is

[1] Ezekiel, chap. 25.
[2] Ezekiel, chaps. 26–28.
[3] Ezekiel, chaps. 29–32.
[4] Ezekiel, chaps. 27–28.
[5] Ezek. 28:25 f.; 29:21.

the fact that Babylon's wickedness is never mentioned, nor is any punishment threatened against the mighty mistress of the world. The prophets were not wholly lacking in worldly wisdom! These prophecies against the heathen were, on the one hand, a source of satisfaction and comfort to the outraged feelings of the exiles, and, on the other hand, they gave some assurance that the justice and honor of Yahweh would be vindicated against those peoples who had laughed him to scorn.

The final section of the Book of Ezekiel falls into two sections: (1) chapters 33–39, containing some things that are preliminary to the dawn of the new era, and (2) chapters 40–48, giving the detailed program of the arrangements of the coming messianic age. A notable change now appeared in Ezekiel's preaching. Whereas prior to the final downfall of Jerusalem he had been constantly emphasizing the wickedness of Judah and the consequent necessity of further punishment, now that the city has fallen, he just as constantly emphasizes the thought of a coming deliverance from exile, and the dawn of a glorious future. Such a change of message was needed. The people's faith had been too largely centered in the persistence of Jerusalem as the city of Yahweh, and the effect of its actual fall was well-nigh crushing. They were brought by the contemplation of this disaster to a recognition of the sinfulness of the nation that was likely to rob them of all hope.[1] It was the existence of such a state of mind that caused Ezekiel to relate the vision recorded in chapter 37. The force of the argument is that just as Yahweh is able to raise the dead bodies of individuals to life again, so will he also raise up the dead nation to a renewed life.

[1] Cf. Ezek. 33:10f.; 37:11.

They believe in the resurrection of the body; why not believe also in Yahweh's promise of the resurrection of the nation? The prophet himself is convinced of it, and uses every possible device to create a similar confidence in the hearts of his people. He likewise assures them that in the coming days Judah and Israel, carried captive in 721 B.C., are both to be restored to the homeland and to be reunited as one people serving Yahweh together under a king from the house of David.[1] This restored people is to be a regenerated people in whom Yahweh shall have implanted a new heart.[2] The motive of the restoration on Yahweh's part is "that the nations may know that I am Yahweh."[3] To this end the nations of the earth are to fall by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Israel. Gog, of the land of Magog, will gather all the peoples of the earth and lead them against the Kingdom of Yahweh. In the land of Israel, Yahweh will turn loose upon Gog and his hosts all the fearful, destructive agencies at his command. It will not be necessary for Israel to strike a blow; the victory will be wrought by Yahweh's own might alone. All that will remain for Israel to do will be the task of clearing up the battlefield and burying the dead. This was a genuinely apocalyptic vision. Gog is presented as the long-looked-for foe threatened by the prophets of old.[4] The noteworthy thing about these oracles against the nations and these glowing promises for Israel is that at the time they were uttered there was no visible sign of the likelihood of any of these things coming to pass. They were hopes resting upon no outer basis of material sup-

[1] Ezek. 37:15–28. [2] Ezek. 36:25 ff.

[3] Ezek. 36:22, 32; 38:16, 23; 39:6, 7, 27, 28.

[4] Ezek. 38:17.

port. The prophet challenges his people to a daring achievement of faith. He might almost have said with a later saint: "*Credo quia incredibile est.*" He believed that Yahweh could do anything that ought to be done, and to set himself right in the eyes of the nations he must restore Israel and bring the nations to their knees. Ezekiel lauched forth upon an unknown sea, and possessed of an invincible idealism confidently summoned his fellow-exiles to follow his lead. His faith in Yahweh knew no bounds.

The last section of Ezekiel's prophecies is dated from the year 573–572 B.C. It was written apparently after a period of silence lasting for twelve years. It consists of a body of legislation seen by the prophet in a vision and based quite evidently in large part upon his own former experience and observation as a priest in the Temple. This legislation constitutes the program of life for the citizens of the approaching messianic age. The outstanding element in it is ritualistic; the conception of life that shines through all its enactments is that represented by the priesthood. The program provides for the reconstruction of the Temple, full details for which are furnished;[1] the altar receives special attention in this connection.[2] The rules and regulations controlling the organization and duties of the priesthood fill chapter 44. The details of various duties and of the ritual of offerings, together with laws controlling the Sabbath, holy days, and the like occupy 45:9—46:24. The description of the River of Life which is to flow forth from the Temple-mount and descend to the Dead Sea, fructifying the intervening land and changing that life-destroying sea into a fresh-water lake, makes 47:1–12 an interesting bit of imaginative

[1] Ezek. 40:1—43:12. [2] Ezek. 43:13–27.

writing. The new allotment of the land of Canaan is given much attention.[1] The dominating thought throughout all this code is the idea of the holiness of Yahweh. The whole scheme is wrought out in such a way as to guard that holiness from contamination by contact with any profane object. This is seen in the location and environment of the Temple. It appears in the sharp distinction made here for the first time between the priests and Levites. The priests in the new era are to be the sons of Zadok only.[2] These were the descendants of the former priests in Jerusalem. The Levites were not permitted to perform the functions of a priest because they had degraded and defiled themselves by serving as priests at the local sanctuaries throughout the land.[3] The future name of the holy city is to be "Yahweh-shammah," i.e., "Yahweh is there."

Ezekiel has been called the father of Judaism because he exercised so profound an influence upon all the later religious life. He emphasized ritualistic measures and methods as no prophet heretofore had dreamed of doing. By his exaltation of ritualism and legalism, he imperiled the supremacy of the ethical element in the religious life. He made it possible for men to substitute ceremonial for character and to think that they were doing God service thereby. He exalted the book phase of religion as no other prophet had done. He represented his own inspiration as having come to him in the form of a book which he swallowed and digested.[4] He identified the good life with adherence to the precepts of a written law. He was intensely nationalistic and narrowly particularistic. He

[1] Ezek. 45:1–8; 47:13–23; 48:1–35.
[2] Ezek. 43:19; 44:15.
[3] Ezek. 44:6–14; 48:11.
[4] Ezek. 2:8—3:3.

blazed the way for all the later development of apocalypticism. He introduced a new interpretation, or rather, misinterpretation of Israel's history as having been from the very beginning a period of deterioration. But, notwithstanding all this, he represented the great conservative element in the religion of Judah that kept it true to its own inner spirit and protected it from evaporation, on the one hand, and, on the other, from such amalgamation with pagan religions as would have cost Hebrew religion its very soul. It is not too much to say with a recent writer that Ezekiel was "the most influential man that we find in the whole course of Hebrew history."[1]

[1] H. P. Smith, *Old Testament History* (1903), p. 327.

CHAPTER XI

THE RISE OF PERSIA AND THE UNKNOWN VOICE

The reign of Nebuchadrezzar, under whom Ezekiel had lived and worked, was long (605–562 B.C.) and prosperous. He concentrated his energies upon Babylonia itself, in rebuilding cities, in erecting and repairing temples, and in dredging out old canals and digging new ones. He neglected the outer provinces of the empire and aroused jealousy especially by the favor he showed toward the city of Babylon. Upon his death political anarchy set in, and internal strife from that time on made it impossible to present a united front against an effective foreign invader. His successor was his son Amel-Marduk (=Evil-Merodach of II Kings 25:27 f.) who reigned for two years (562–560 B.C.), and was then murdered by his own brother-in-law, Nergal-shar-usur (560–556 B.C.), better known to us as Neriglissar. He handed the throne down to his son, Labashi-Marduk, who had reigned only nine months when he was murdered by a band of conspirators who placed a Babylonian ruler on the throne that had been occupied for seventy years by Chaldeans. At the end of the reign of this ruler (555–538 B.C.), Nabuna'id by name (otherwise known as Nabonidus), the land of Babylonia changed hands.

The Medes had received all the eastern and northern provinces of the deceased Assyrian Empire, while the Babylonians had taken the western provinces. In 585

B.C., Cyaxares, the Mede, had pushed his frontier far to the west, after defeating the kingdom of Urartu in battle, and had established the boundary between himself and the Lydians at the river Halys. His son, Astyages, reigned after him until 553 B.C. At that time there arose Cyrus the Persian, Prince of Anshan, in Elam. He attained power in his own country and proceeded at once to attack Astyages, whom he overthrew, thus becoming lord of all the territory dominated by the Medes. The spectacular rise of Cyrus to power startled the surrounding peoples, who became alarmed. Consequently, about 547 B.C. Croesus, of Lydia, Amasis, of Egypt, Nabunai'id, of Babylonia, and Sparta joined hands in an alliance against Cyrus, a menace to all of them alike. But Cyrus learned of their plans and thwarted them by prompt action. He attacked Croesus, of Lydia, and brought him to subjection before his allies could rally to his aid. He followed up this success by conquering the Greek states of Caria and Lycia within the next three years.

Immediately after his victory over Croesus, Cyrus intrusted his western operations to one of his generals and hastened in person to attack Babylonia. By 546 B.C. southern Babylonia was invaded from Elam and a Persian governor was installed in Erech. After a brief lull in the hostilities, Gobryas, who was governing Assyria for Cyrus, inflicted a severe defeat on the Babylonians at Opis (539 B.C.). Bel-shar-usur (=Bel-shazzar), the son of Nabuna'id, was in command of the Babylonian troops in that battle. His father, the king, was then at Sippar, far to the south of Opis; but he at once, upon hearing of the defeat of Opis, fled to Borsippa, still farther to the south. Two days after the victory at Opis, Gobryas en-

tered the city of Babylon, without the necessity of striking a single blow. The citadel at Babylon, however, seems to have held out in resistance and not to have yielded to the Persians until March, 538 B.C., at which time Cyrus himself was probably present.[1]

During the closing years of the Babylonian rule, the prophet whose sermons are contained in Isaiah, chapters 40–55, was observing the course of events and interpreting their meaning to the exiles in Babylonia.[2] All scholars of today agree that these prophecies were written, not by Isaiah in the eighth century B.C., but by a contemporary of the exile, who wrote out of the midst of exilic conditions.[3] He was stirred up to prophesy by the rapid rise of Cyrus to power. He saw in this new world-ruler the one chosen of Yahweh to give his people their freedom. The prophet's task was to prepare the people to take advantage of their freedom when the opportunity should come. This meant the creation of a new state of mind among the exiles. The people had lost the hope of a return; they had made up their minds to accept the inevitable, and to make the best of the situation in which they found themselves. It was necessary that Ezekiel

[1] For the stories of these events as told by both Nabuna'id and Cyrus, see the "Annals of Nabonidus" and the Cyrus cylinder in R. F. Harper's *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (1901), pp. 168–74. Cf. R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament* (1912), pp. 371–84.

[2] For introductions to these chapters, see the list of commentaries on Isaiah given on p. 67.

[3] Scholars vary in opinion as to the region in which this prophet lived; but here we shall assume his residence in Babylonia. This supposition becomes doubly strong if we assign Isaiah, chap. 35, to the same writer, as there is good reason for doing.

should arouse in them a new faith and stir within them new longings and hopes.

Out of that situation grew the prophet's message. He therefore paid much attention to the thought of God. It was inevitable that many exiles should have lost all faith in Yahweh's ability to defend or care for the interests of his own people. Consequently, they were inclined to forsake him and to turn to the gods of Babylon who had given the Babylonians victory over Jerusalem. Some such state of mind as this explains the stress laid upon the power of Yahweh by this prophet. Nowhere is the omnipotence of Yahweh more eloquently or powerfully presented than by this unknown prophet:

Do you not know? Do you not hear?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
So that its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in;
Who brings nobles to nothing,
And makes judges of the land like the chaos.
Hardly have they been planted, hardly have they been sown,
Hardly has their stock struck root in the earth,
When he blows upon them and they wither,
And the cyclone carries them away like chaff.
To whom, then, would you liken me, that I should be equal?
Says the holy one.
Lift up your eyes on high,
And see: who created these?
He who brings out their host by number,
He calls all of them by name;
Because of the abundance of his resources and since he is of irresistible strength,
Not a single one is missing.[1]

[1] Isa. 40: 21–26. See also Isa. 40: 12–20.

The obverse of the supreme power of Yahweh is, of course, the utter powerlessness of other gods in general, and of idols in particular. No finer exposure of the futility of idols had then been written than that furnished by this prophet:

Those who form idols are all a desolation,
And their objects of desire are of no use;
Their witnesses do not see,
Nor do they know, that they may be ashamed.

Who has formed a god,
And molded an idol to be of no use?
Surely, all his associates will be ashamed;
For workmen are but human beings!

They will all assemble together; they will all take their stand;
They will be terrified; they will also be ashamed.
The iron worker works in the coals,
And with hammers he shapes it,
And works it with his strong arm.
But he becomes hungry and strength fails;
He drinks no water, and he faints.

The woodworker stretches a line,
He circumscribes it with the pencil,
He works it with planes and circumscribes it with the compass;
And he makes it after the pattern of a man,
Like the beauty of a human being—to sit in the house!

He cuts down cedars for it;
And he takes a fir or an oak,
And he braces it with wood from the forest.
He plants a cedar and the rain makes it grow.
Then a man uses it for fuel;
And he takes thereof and warms himself.

Indeed, he kindles a fire and bakes his bread.
Then he makes a god and worships;
He makes an idol and prostrates himself before it.

The half of it he has burned up in the fire;
Over half of it he eats meat,
He roasts a roast and is satiated.

Indeed he warms himself and says,
"Ah! I am warm, I have seen fire!"
And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol.
He prostrates himself before it and worships,
And prays to it, and says,
"Deliver me, for thou art my god!"

They do not know; nor do they understand;
For their eyes are beclouded, so they cannot see,
Their minds so that they have no wisdom.
So it does not occur to his mind,
Nor is their knowledge or discernment to say,
"Half of it I have burned in the fire,
And I have baked bread on its coals,
I am roasting meat and eating;
And shall I make the rest of it into an abomination?
Shall I prostrate myself to the product of a tree?"[1]

To reinforce his argument for Yahweh's sole right to recognition as God, he has recourse to a new argument. He calls attention to the predictions made by the prophets of Yahweh in the past which have already been fulfilled. This sort of material occupies his attention a great deal.[2] He challenges the worshipers of other gods to show anything like this in support of their claims. There is none like Yahweh that can tell the end from the beginning.[3] In this connection he speaks of Cyrus, king of Persia. He is the great outstanding figure of the times, and he is the one through whom the prophecies of the past are to find

[1] Isa. 44:9–19. For similar utterances, see Isa. 40:18–20; 41:6 f.; 46:1–7.

[2] Isa. 41:21–29; 42:9; 43:9, 10, 12; 44:6–8; 48:14.

[3] Isa. 46:9, 10.

complete fulfilment.[1] Cyrus, indeed, is so much the servant and agent of Yahweh that he ventures to apply to him the title of Messiah (45:1), and to call him Yahweh's "shepherd" (44:28).

If Yahweh was to be credited with so much power, indeed, with supreme power, then the problem presented itself in a different form. If Yahweh was supreme and omnipotent, how could it be that his people had been allowed to endure so many reverses? If Yahweh's power was not exerted in defense of his people, could it be that Yahweh really loved his people? To this problem, our prophet addressed himself directly. He assured his people that the love of Yahweh for his people was beyond comparison with the most devoted and enduring human love:

But Zion says, "Yahweh has deserted me and the Lord has forgotten me."
Can a woman forget her baby,
And not have pity upon the child of her womb?
Even if these shall forget,
Yet I will not forget thee.
See, I have engraved thee on my palms,
Thy walls are constantly before me.[2]

And again:

For like a wife deserted and grieved
In spirit has Yahweh called thee,
And like a wife from youth when she is rejected, says thy God.
For a brief moment I forsook thee,
But with great mercies will I gather thee.
In quick anger I hid my face from thee for a moment.
But with enduring love will I have compassion on thee;
Says thy vindicator, Yahweh.
For like the days of Noah is this to me;

[1] Isa. 41:2–4, 25; 44:28; 45:1; 46:11; 48:14, 15. [2] Isa. 49:14–16.

In that I swore that the waters of Noah
Should not again pass over the earth;
So have I sworn not to be angry with thee,
Nor to rebuke thee.
For the mountains may remove,
And the hills may totter,
But my love will not leave thee,
Nor will my covenant of peace waver;
Says Yahweh who has compassion on thee.[1]

It is noticeable that the prophet did not seek to prove the love of Yahweh for Judah by a process of argument. No love can be demonstrated by argument, least of all the love of God. He simply poured out his own convictions in glowing certainty and sought to kindle a similar flame in the minds and hearts of his hearers. He believed with all his heart in the love of Yahweh, and he sought to make that faith of his own a contagion laying hold of the lives of his fellow-Jews.

If, however, Yahweh has loved his people and has had the power to help them, what is to be said about the sufferings of Judah? What a strange lover Yahweh must be, if he has not exercised his might to save his beloved ones from disaster! In answer to this, the great problem of the religious mind in his day, this prophet wrote the "Servant of Yahweh Songs." These are four in number, viz., (1) Isa. 42:1–4; (2) Isa. 49:1–6; (3) Isa. 50:4–9; and (4) Isa. 52:13—53:12. In these four "Songs" a different rhythm is employed from that in their contexts, and the theme is constantly that of the experience and the mission of the Servant. Opinions differ somewhat as to the authorship of these "Songs," some holding that they were written by a different hand from that of the author of

[1] Isa. 54:6–10.

Isaiah, chapters 40–55, as a whole;[1] but the arguments for that view are hardly convincing. They seem rather to be an essential element in Isaiah, chapters 40–55, without which its argument would be incomplete.

A further variety of opinion exists as to the identity of the Servant of Yahweh.[2] Is the Servant to be identified with some individual in the course of history, or yet to come, or with some part within the Hebrew nation, or with the Jewish people as a whole? A brief survey of the main facts involved will make our position here perfectly clear. The term "Servant of Yahweh," or "my Servant," occurs outside of the "Servant of Yahweh Songs" themselves in the following places: Isa. 41:8 ff.; 42:18–22; 44:1, 2, 21, 26; 45:4; 50:10. In Isa. 41:8 ff.; 44:1, 2, 21; and 45:4 the term "Servant" is definitely identified with or explained by the word "Israel." In the remaining passages, there is nothing that calls for a different meaning for "Servant."[3] Now, if the term "Servant" everywhere in this prophecy means "Israel" outside of the "Songs," it certainly is to be supposed that the meaning of the term will be the same inside of the "Songs," if the "Songs" and the other prophecies are by the same writer, as we have supposed. Only if the facts or usage within the "Songs" themselves compel some other interpretation ought we to think of changing the meaning.

[1] See for this point of view the commentary of Duhm (3d ed., 1914), and the brief history of interpretation in F. C. Eiselen, *The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament*, I (1923), 224–34.

[2] See previous note.

[3] In Isa. 42:18–22, the description of the Servant and the reference to the "people" in vs. 22 make the identity of the "Servant" as Israel clear. In 44:26, the word "Servant" should be pluralized, as it is by the Septuagint (cf. "his messengers").

In Isa. 42:1–5 the Greek version of Isaiah inserts "Jacob" before "my Servant" and "Israel" before "my chosen," thus showing that the identification with the nation goes back into pre-Christian times. The phrase "I uphold" in 42:1 is used of Israel in 41:10; "my chosen" appears also in 41:8; 43:20; and 45:4 where it is applied to Israel; and the pouring out of Yahweh's spirit (42:1) is promised upon the Israelites in general in 44:3. In the following context at 42:6, the term "the people" is used of the nations at large, as in 42:5 and 40:7. So in the first song there is nothing forcing us here to find a different sense for the word "Servant."

The second song[1] presents more difficulty. The terms of verse 1 are very intimate and personal; but "Israel" is "called" in 41:9 and 48:12, "formed from the womb" in 46:3. Not only so, but the identification with "Israel" occurs in this very song itself (49:3).[2] This would seem to settle the matter. But difficulty arises in verses 5 and 6, where the Servant is represented by the common translation as doing something for Israel and therefore as an agent separate and apart from Israel. If, however, the passage can be so translated as to make the point of view here regarding the Servant accord with the standpoint elsewhere, we certainly ought to accept such a rendering. To that end, we translate 49:5, 6 as follows:

> And now, Yahweh,
> Who formed me from the womb to be his Servant,
> Says that he will bring Jacob unto himself,
> And that Israel will be gathered unto him—
> For I am honorable in the eyes of Yahweh,

[1] Isa. 49:1–6.

[2] "Israel" is present in all the versions, and lacking in only one Hebrew MS.

And my God has become my strength—
Yea, he says, "It is too light a thing,
Since thou art my Servant,
That I should raise up the tribes of Jacob
And restore the preserved of Israel;
And so I will give thee for a light of the nations,
That my deliverance may be unto the end of the earth."

This translation is grammatically at least as good as the common rendering, and it removes our difficulty without any need of textual change. There is now no reason for seeking for a new meaning for "Servant" here.

In the third song,[1] when we keep in mind the highly figurative and personal style of these "Servant Songs," there is nothing compelling us or even inviting us to change the identity of the Servant. The same quality of style must be remembered in the most famous and familiar of the "Songs," viz., Isa. 52:13—53:12. In the common rendering of 53:8, the Servant again seems to be distinguished from Israel. The text there, however, is apparently corrupt, as is shown by the Septuagint, and when corrected, reads:

By an oppressive judgment he was taken;
And who considered his generation?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
Because of the transgression of the peoples he was stricken to the death.

New translation is also called for in 53:10, 11, where a slight change of text is required, which in no way affects the identity of the Servant.

Yet it pleased Yahweh to crush him by disease;
To see if he would offer himself in atonement,
That he might see his seed and prolong his days.

[1] Isa. 50:4–9.

And that the purpose of Yahweh might prosper through his hand;
That he should see of the tribulation of himself to his satisfaction,
That through knowledge of him my Servant should fully justify many,
And should bear their sins.

It seems, then, that there is no need to see in the term "Servant" in the "Songs" any other meaning than that which is found elsewhere. The Servant is Israel, sometimes spoken of in terms of reality, recognition being made of Israel's failings and sins; at other times, spoken of in idealistic terms, a significance being given to the conduct of Israel in the past that none but an enthusiastic idealist could ever have used.

What, then, is the contribution of the "Songs" to the solution of the problem of Israel's sufferings? Israel was placed in the world as the chosen representative of Yahweh. The nation's God-given task was to interpret Yahweh to the world and so to open the eyes of the world to his greatness and goodness and holiness. The outcome is yet to be seen. Thus far, the experience of Israel has been an experience of oppression and suffering at the hands of the nations of the earth. They have triumphed over the people of Yahweh and despised them as a weak, insignificant folk not worth consideration. But the situation is about to change. Yahweh is going to glorify his people. The nations are going to be overwhelmed with amazement as they see the manifestation of the divine power in favor toward Israel. Then they will be overcome with sorrow and contrition as there bursts upon them the realization that the sufferings borne by Israel were sufferings that they themselves should have borne, that Israel was suffering in their stead. Thus will the nations

of the world be brought to a realization of the true state of affairs, to a grateful recognition of the service done them by Israel, and to a loyal acceptance of the spiritual leadership of Israel and Israel's God. The beginning of Israel's servanthood was grievous, but the end thereof was to be made manifest in glory.

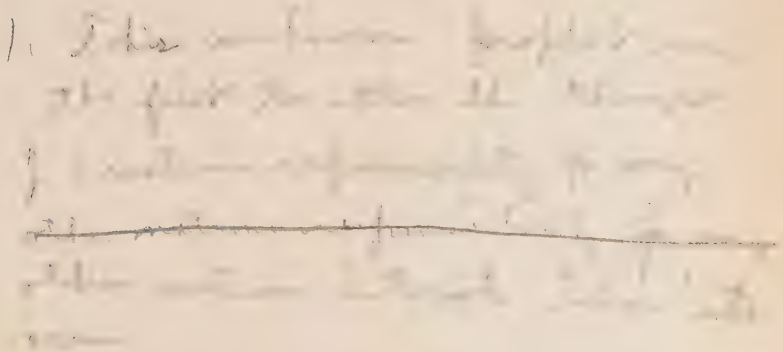
This is a solution of the problem of its national history for Israel that challenges wonder. What a generous evaluation of the peoples of the non-Hebraic world this was that conceived them capable of interpreting Israel's conduct in such noble terms! What large-heartedness is here attributed to Israel when it is claimed that this suffering was borne uncomplainingly, if not, indeed, willingly, for the sake of the good of the rest of the world! How could a Hebrew ever have arrived at the thought of Israel suffering for the sins of mankind as a whole? Two things must be reckoned with in answering this question. First, whatever Israel may have endured in the past, the suffering is all over now, and the misery of the past is to be more than compensated for by the glories of the future. Second, this singer was but widening the scope of a very old conception. The dominating thought in the Hebrew family and national groups was that of social solidarity. Not until the age of Ezekiel, as we have seen, was the thought of the individual's rights as a person fully worked out. The individual existed for the family, the family for the clan or tribe, and that in turn for the nation as a whole. What this poet did was to take this thought of social solidarity and make it applicable to the world at large. The whole world was looked upon by him as a huge human family. Every nation in it existed for the benefit of all. All were potentially, at least, children of

one God and Father. Israel, then, as one member of this great family, had been suffering for the good of the entire family. Israel's sufferings, therefore, had not been in vain. Not only were they in satisfaction of the demands of the divine justice, paying the penalty for the sins of all mankind, but they were also to be effective in the redemption of the human race and in its regeneration to a new life as worshipers of the one and only God. This singer was a voice crying in the wilderness. He was the first to utter the thought of one nation's responsibility for any other nation's interests than its own. He laid the sins and sorrows of the world upon Israel's shoulders. Israel refused to accept the responsibility or the burden. Here and there in later history the call of this great Unknown found an echo in the bosom of a Hebrew idealist. But the grandeur of this conception of national life has not yet found realization upon the earth. Our 100 per cent Americanism shudders in terror before such an ideal as this.[1]

It at once appears, upon consideration of such an interpretation of the Servant's person and work as this, that the problem of Israel's sufferings is met much more directly by this message than it could possibly be by any interpretation of the Servant as a person. Some aspects of the figurative description of the Servant and his work coincide closely with some elements and episodes in the records of the life and work of Jesus. But the conception of the Servant's work as a whole is couched in wholly different terms from those that fit the person and work of

[1] For a more detailed presentation of this aspect of the Servant's function, see J. M. Powis Smith, "The Ethical Significance of Isaiah, Chapter 53," *Journal of Religion*, III (1923), 132–40; *idem, The Moral Life of the Hebrews* (1923), pp. 149–64.

Jesus. This is an attempt to furnish a solution of an international problem and to bring consolation and inspiration to the Jewish nation as a whole. The spirit that breathes throughout these "Songs" is a spirit of intense devotion to the Jewish program of life and of longing to see the whole world accept Jewish leadership and Jewish ideals. The whole purpose and work of this prophet was in a very real sense part of a messianic program. He was urging his people to prepare themselves for the coming messianic opportunity. His great fear was lest the opportunity should come and his people not be ready for it. He would stimulate and encourage them to believe in a great future and to expect its dawn at any moment. He looks confidently for the coming of the opportunity for the exiles to return to Judah. He paints glowing pictures of the joys of that journey and of the way in which all natural difficulties and hardships will be overcome; see, for example, Isa. 40:3–11; 41:8–20; and chapter 55. Hard-headed and practical as the Jews of Babylonia doubtless were, they treasured the words of this great idealist, even though they did not wholly surrender themselves to the power of his ideals. His admirers then, as now, were probably many; his followers few.



CHAPTER XII

PREMATURE MESSIANIC HOPES

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah lived and worked in Jerusalem. Their period of activity extended from 520 to 516 B.C. In 538 B.C. Cyrus, of Persia, had issued an edict permitting the return home of all captive peoples, including the Jewish exiles.[1] The writer of Isaiah, chapters 40–53, had looked upon Cyrus as the one who would usher in the messianic age for the world. He had done his best to arouse interest in and enthusiasm for the return movement, but with slight success. Very few took advantage of the opportunity to go back to Judah when it presented itself. There was no rush home in 538 B.C. The process of return was gradual and slow. As a matter of fact, Haggai and Zechariah, speaking only eighteen years at the most after the supposed return, make no allusion to the return of exiles on a large scale. No reader of their books would ever suspect that they were written for a community made up largely of returned captives. There was little in Jerusalem, aside from sentiment, to make it inviting to the exiles. The city was left desolate. The Temple was desecrated and destroyed. All business was at a standstill. Instead of a thriving mart, the city had

[1] See Ezra 1:1–4; II Chron. 36:22, 23. For Cyrus' generous treatment of his enemies, reference may be had to Herodotus i. 86 ff., and Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* iii. 1 ff.; iv. 4 f.; vii. 2; viii. 1 ff. Cyrus tells us in his own words that he collected all the captives from the west and restored them to their homes; see the "Cylinder of Cyrus" as translated in R. F. Harper's *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (1901), p. 173.

become a defenseless ruin, where a broken and discouraged people eked out a precarious existence. On the other hand, there is good reason to think that the Jews in Babylonia had prospered. They had acted upon the advice given them in Jeremiah's letter (Jeremiah, chap. 29), and built themselves into the economic and industrial life of the Babylonian community as a whole. They had all their investments and business interests in Babylonia. The proposition to pull up stakes, sell out, and start all over again in a new and far-off location would not appeal with great force to successful Jewish merchants or farmers in Babylonia.

Another difficulty in the way of the creation of great enthusiasm for the return movement lay in the fact that most of the original exiles of 597 and 586 B.C. must have died before 538 B.C. Very few of the exiles of 538 B.C. had ever seen Jerusalem or Judah. Those who had once lived there had left it so early in life as to have forgotten practically all about it. They had lived in Babylonia practically all their lives and in no real sense ever thought of Judah as "home." They were content where they were; or if not wholly satisfied, probably thought it "better to bear the ills they had than to fly to ills they knew not of." It is not probable that there was any great degree of homesickness among the Jewish population of 538 B.C. A still further element working against the creation of a general desire to return to Palestine was the length of the arduous journey. The only possible route for a great company of people was to the north and west, along the banks of the Euphrates; west to Damascus; and south to Judah and Jerusalem. This was a journey requiring weeks of time. The seriousness of this obstacle is attested by the

fact that the writer of Isaiah, chapters 40–55, promised the exiles a royal road straight across the intervening desert. He assured them that all the natural difficulties of the desert route would be overcome, in that fountains and rivers would be opened in the dry land and abundance of vegetation would clothe the desert.[1] Mountains were to be made low and rough places smooth. It would appear, therefore, that there was no concerted movement to return in large numbers, but that the return movements were confined to small groups of enthusiasts or malcontents who trickled back to Judah from time to time as occasion served. These made no marked impress upon the life of the Jerusalem community, for they were too few in number, and probably also too insignificant in character and ability, to count for much in the group as a whole.

Thus eighteen years passed away with no great change in conditions among the Jews either in Jerusalem and Judah or in Babylonia. But about 520 B.C. things began to take place in the Persian Empire that attracted the attention of alert patriots among the Jews. Cambyses, the Persian monarch, was in Egypt in 521 B.C. Gaumata seized the opportunity afforded by the absence of Cambyses to head a revolt against him in Persia. Gaumata put up the claim that he was Bardes, son of Cyrus. As a matter of fact, Cambyses had assassinated Bardes. Cambyses hastened to return to Persia; but on the way thither he called his councilors together, confessed to them the murder of Bardes, and thereupon committed suicide. Gaumata was thus left in possession of the empire. But he was slain by Darius Hystaspes in October, 521 B.C.

[1] Isa. 40:3–5; 41:17–19; 43:19–21; 48:21; 49:9–11.

Revolt thereupon broke out all over the Persian Empire. Babylonia revolted twice, as did also Susiania. Media, Sagartia, Margiana, and Persia each organized a movement of rebellion, and in the last-mentioned country a new Bardes presented himself as entitled to the throne. Darius set himself the task of crushing these revolts, and overthrew his foes one after another in succession. But he did not succeed in restoring peace and order until 520–519 B.C. His report of his victories is proof of his gratitude to Ahura-Mazda, his God:

Thus speaks Darius the king: That which I did came to pass solely through the grace of Ahura-Mazda. Since I have been king I have fought nineteen battles, by the will of Ahura-Mazda I smote them! Nine of their kings I took as prisoners. One, Gaumata by name, the Magian, lied and spoke as follows: "I am Bardiya the son of Cyrus." This one made Persia rebellious. One, by the name of Atrina, the Susian, lied and spoke as follows: "I am the king of Susa." This one made Elam rebellious. One, Nidintu-Bel by name, a Babylonian, lied and spoke as follows: "I am Nebuchadrezzar, the son of Nabonidus." This one made Babylon rebellious. One, by the name of Martiya, a Persian, lied and spoke as follows: "I am Ummanish, king of Susa." This one made Susa rebellious. One, Parumartish by name, a Median, lied and spoke as follows: "I am Hashatriti of the seed of Umaku-Ishtar." This one made Media rebellious. One, Citrantakhma by name, a Sagartian, lied and spoke as follows: "I am king of Sagartia, of the seed of Umaku-Ishtar." This one made Sagartia rebellious. One, Parada by name, a Margianian, lied and spoke as follows: "I am king in Margiana." This one made Margiana rebellious. One, Vahyazdata by name, a Persian, lied and spoke as follows; "I am Bardiya, the son of Cyrus." This one made Persia rebellious. One, Arahu by name, an Armenian, lied and spoke as follows: "I am Nebuchadrezzar, the son of Nabonidus." This one made Babylon rebellious.

Thus speaks Darius the king: These nine kings the hands of my army seized within these battles. Thus speaks Darius the king: As for these provinces which became rebellious, a lie made them

rebellious, so that they deceived the people. Thereupon Ahuramazda gave them into my hands; according to my desire I treated them.[1]

During the progress of these movements of revolt, the two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, both began their activity. They were partners in a common enterprise, that of getting slumbering Judah wide awake and ready for the messianic dispensation that they thought was close at hand.[2] Haggai's sermons were all preached in the year 520 B.C.;[3] Zechariah began in 520 B.C., perhaps two months later than Haggai's first appearance, and continued until the end of 518 B.C.[4] The unsettled state of the Persian Empire was the immediate cause of their appearance as prophets. Ezekiel had taught the Jews to look for a world-conflict as ushering in the new dispensation, and to the eager eyes of these prophets these general movements toward revolt against Persia looked like the breaking up of the organized world which was to precede the appearance of the Messiah upon earth. With this general situation in mind, let us see what message and program these prophets had to present.

Haggai's little book contains four discourses. The first of these is 1:2–11. Haggai urged his people to begin at once the rebuilding of the ruined Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem. They said that they were not ready, that it was no time to be starting a building enterprise. Hag-

[1] See the full text of this inscription from Behistun in R. F. Harper, *op. cit.*, pp. 174–87.

[2] For introductions to Haggai and Zechariah see the commentaries on these prophets by H. G. Mitchell in the "International Critical Commentary."

[3] See Hag. 1:1; 1:15; 2:1; 2:10; 2:20.

[4] See Zech. 1:1, 7; 7:1.

gai replied that they seemed to be able to build homes for themselves; and assured them that the poor crops and hard times from which they were suffering were caused by the fact that Yahweh's displeasure was resting upon them because they had so shamefully neglected the rebuilding of his house. Therefore let them begin building operations at once, and so secure for themselves the restoration of the divine favor in the form of national prosperity.

About three weeks after this challenge, the people, led by their governor, Zerubbabel, and the high priest, Joshua, entered upon the assigned task, with Haggai's assurance that Yahweh was with them.[1] But after the work of building had gone on for about a month and the scope and plan of the building began to emerge, Haggai found it necessary to furnish new encouragement. Some were comparing the present temple with what they had seen or heard of the temple of Solomon, and the comparison was not favorable to the present enterprise. The first enthusiasm of the people was wearing away under the strain of the heavy and continuous work. Haggai therefore assured them again that Yahweh was with them and would bless them. To that end Yahweh would overturn the nations and the wealth of the nations would come pouring into the new temple, so that its glory and splendor would far transcend that of Solomon's temple.[2]

Two months later, Haggai preached another message of reproof and encouragement. He called their attention to the difference between the infectious quality of "holy" flesh, on the one hand, and that of a dead body, on the other, and pointed out that holiness was not anything

[1] Hag. 1:12–15. [2] Hag. 2:1–8.

like so penetrating or "catching" as "uncleanness." Even so, the people were forgetting that the few weeks or months in which they had been doing the will of Yahweh in the rebuilding of his house could hardly be expected to counteract or annul the influence of the long generations during which they had gone the way of wickedness. It is evident that they were beginning to complain because as yet they had seen nothing of the prosperity and glory so generously promised by the prophet. But having pointed out the unreasonableness of this attitude, Haggai at once renewed his promises and assured them of immediate fulfilment. He reminded them of the fact that the crops had been poor up to the time of the beginning of the temple-building, and that since they had begun building there had not been time for a new harvest; but the coming harvest would be bounteous, indicating the bestowal of the divine blessing which had rested on the community since the building was undertaken.[1]

The last recorded oracle of Haggai was spoken on the same day as the foregoing. In it he predicted a great world-upheaval on the coming Day of Yahweh. Amid the ruin of the nations, Zerubbabel is to be singled out as Yahweh's servant, whom he has chosen for special honor. The full significance of this reference to Zerubbabel does not appear until we come to the message of Zechariah.

Zechariah's first sermon was preached two months after the first appearance of Haggai. The people had been building for a little over a month. In his first sermon Zechariah warned his hearers of the seriousness of their responsibility in listening to him, the prophet of Yahweh. He reminded them that the prophets of old had

[1] Hag. 2:10–19.

preached to unwilling hearers and had failed to secure from them the acceptance of their message. But the predictions of those great prophets had been fulfilled, and the nation had good cause to regret that the words of the former prophets had not been heeded. In view of this sad history, it would be well for the contemporaries of Zechariah to heed his message as the word of Yahweh and to conform to his demands.[1]

The second of Zechariah's discourses was given more than three months later. Through this vision of the heavenly horsemen, the divine assurance is again given the people that the Temple will be completed and the capital and cities in general will again overflow with population and prosperity.[2] There followed upon this first vision a series of six more visions, extending from Zech. 2:1 to 6:8. The first of these simply assures Zechariah that the nations that have oppressed Judah are all to be overthrown.[3] The second impresses it upon the mind of Zechariah, and through him upon the people, that the Jerusalem of the future will need no walls, for Yahweh will be its sufficient protection. The population will also be so numerous that it will overflow the countryside.[4] To this is now appended a summons to the exiles to flee from Babylon, and an assurance that Yahweh's people are as immune from danger at the hands of their foes as is the apple of Yahweh's eye. The day is coming when many nations will serve Yahweh and be numbered as his people, while Jerusalem will once more become the chosen city of Yahweh.[5]

[1] Zech. 1:1–6.
[2] Zech. 1:7–17.
[3] Zech. 1:18–21.
[4] Zech. 2:1–5.
[5] Zech. 2:6–13.

The visions continue with the picture of Joshua, the high priest, clothed in dirty garments and standing before the angel of Yahweh, with the Satan close at hand as his accuser.[1] But the Satan is rebuked by the angel, and the attendants are ordered to clothe Joshua in proper clothing and to put a priestly miter upon his head. Joshua is bidden to keep the law of Yahweh and to guard the sacred temple against profanation. Further, the assurance is given to Joshua that Yahweh is about to bring forth his servant, the "Branch" (or "Sprout"). We recall that Zerubbabel was called the "servant of Yahweh" by Haggai (2:23); and that in Jer. 23:5 and 33:15, the title "Branch" is applied to the coming Messiah. The coming forth of the Branch is to be the opening of a period of peace and prosperity.[2]

The visions continue in chapter 4. The vision of the golden candlestick and the two "sons-of-oil" was intended to present impressively the thought that Yahweh was in close touch with and in immediate control of the course of human events. The two "sons-of-oil" or "anointed ones" were in all probability meant to symbolize Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the servant of Yahweh and the Branch. These two are the earthly representatives of Yahweh on high. In studying this vision, it becomes apparent at once that verses 6*b*–10*a* are intrusive elements in the vision and of right belong somewhere else. The best place for them is before 2:6 ff. They present very force-

[1] This is the first appearance of "the Satan" in the history of Hebrew literature. The term here is not a proper name, for it has the definite article prefixed; so also in Job, chaps. 1 and 2; the only other appearance of this agent is in I Chron. 21:1, where it is a proper name.

[2] Zech. 3:1–10.

fully the proposition that the vindication of Judah and its glorification are not to be thought of as coming about through human power, but rather as caused by the spirit of the all-powerful Yahweh. All difficulties will melt away before Zerubbabel, and he will carry through the rebuilding of the Temple to triumphant conclusion. The beginnings may look small, but the end will be glorious.

The vision of the flying roll and the bushel measure portrays vividly the cleansing process that is to remove all wickedness from the holy land and to transport it to Babylonia, where wickedness will be at home, "in her own place."[1] The series of visions closes with the representation of the four chariots, each with a team of horses of one color.[2] The bearing of the vision upon the situation is not very obvious. Perhaps, the prophet thought discretion the better part of valor here, and therefore did not wish to make his meaning too plain to the Persians. Apparently, the vision was meant to convey the comforting assurance that Yahweh was about to reduce Babylonia, the center of the Persian Empire, to acquiescence in his great plans for the coming messianic age and the glorification of Judah.

The series of visions is followed by the record of a very significant action in 6:9–15. The record as it stands in the Hebrew text is not quite clear. Why should more than one crown be placed on the head of the high priest? And why should "crowns" in verse 14 be followed by a verb in the singular, as "shall be" is in its Hebrew form? Further, the "Branch" of verse 12 can be none other than Zerubbabel, who is so designated in Zech. 3:8; he is also credited with the expected completion of the Temple in

[1] Zech. 5:1–11. [2] Zech. 6:1–8.

Zech. 4:7, 9, even as the "Branch" is here in verse 13. Not only so, but the Septuagint offers a variation in verse 13, reading "and the priest shall be at his right hand." These facts seem to point to some tampering with the original text. We are fairly safe in reconstructing the episode somewhat as follows. Just after a small company of exiles had returned to Jerusalem, Zechariah felt called upon to lead the way in inducting Zerubbabel into his office as the promised Messiah. Consequently, he had two crowns made, and in a small private group he proceeded to place these crowns upon the heads of Zerubbabel, the governor, and of Joshua, the high priest. The crowning of Zerubbabel was a deliberate attempt to launch the messianic movement in full force; Joshua, the priest, was crowned in order to give recognition to the priestly order in the messianic program. That Zerubbabel was actually regarded by his contemporaries as the Messiah is clear from this incident, from the references to him as the "Branch," and from the allusion to him in Hag. 2:23. It seems strange to us that so ideal a figure as the Messiah should ever have been identified with a person living here upon earth. But though Zerubbabel was, perhaps, the first Jew to be so honored, he was by no means the last. Messiahs appeared from time to time to give trouble to the Persian, Greek, and Roman overlords of Judah. This attempt to introduce the messianic age proved abortive, of course. What happened to its promoters and to its central figure we do not know, but can readily imagine. The Persian government was tolerant and liberal; but no government would look with equanimity upon a movement to set up a crowned king over one of its subject provinces. The tragic ending of the movement is sunk in oblivion.

Later hands took the narrative of this episode and eliminated from it the name of Zerubbabel, but left that of Joshua standing, since the supremacy of the priestly order became more and more conspicuous as time went on. The collapse of this messianic movement was a terrific blow to Jewish faith. From this time on we have no records of any activity for a half-century or more. Hope was crushed.

Chapters 7 and 8 of Zechariah contain the record of the inquiry made in 518 B.C. by a delegation sent to the priests as to whether or not the custom of observing fasts in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months should be any longer continued. Zechariah took it upon himself to offer an answer. He declared that the fasts were of no value in and of themselves; but that obedience to the requirements of Yahweh was the all-important thing. Because the prophets of old had not been heeded when they issued a call to follow after justice and to practice mercy and kindness to the poor and helpless, the punishments of the past had been severe and long continued. But those days are over. The future is full of hope and promise. Fasts will be turned into feasts; and peoples from every nation will come pouring into Judah to seek Yahweh in Jerusalem. The nations will be crowding around the Jews pleading to be permitted to join their number because they have heard that God is with the Jews. Jerusalem will be called "the city of truth" and Zion will be named "the holy mountain." The scattered exiles will all be brought back home and the streets of Jerusalem be filled with old men and women whose hearts shall be lightened by the merry laughter of the boys and girls who fill all the open spaces. These oracles of encouragement in all probability were spoken before or during the brief period

of messianic activity recorded in 6:9–15. The hopes they reflect were all dashed to the earth by the unwritten calamity that brought that movement to an untimely end.

It may well be that some of the messianic oracles now incorporated in Isaiah, chapters 1–39, were called forth by the emergence of Zerubbabel as Messiah. If that situation called forth two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, with messianic interpretations, it is not at all improbable that other zealots should also have seen in Zerubbabel the promised Messiah ushering in the dawn of the Golden Age. We cannot date these messianic chapters in Isaiah with any certainty, and placing them here is, at best, but a conjecture. But some of the characteristics of the messianic hope that centered around Zerubbabel recur in some of these messianic pictures also. Zerubbabel actually was a descendant of the great King David, and to that extent, at least, he was a promising candidate for the vacant messianic throne.

One of the most famous prophecies is found in Isa. 9:1–6:

The people who have been walking in darkness will see a great light;
They who have dwelt in a land of densest darkness—upon them will the light shine.
Thou wilt multiply the nation, thou wilt magnify its mirth;
They will make merriness before thee like the merriness at harvest-time,
Just as men exult when they share spoil;
Because the yoke of his burden and the staff of his shoulder,
The stick of his driver, thou wilt break as in the day of Midian.
For every boot worn in the tumult of battle,
And every mantle rolled in blood,
Will be for burning, as fuel for the fire.
For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us.

And the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called,
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Father forever, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of dominion and of prosperity there will be no end
Upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom
To establish it and to support it in justice and righteousness,
From henceforth, even for ever.
The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will do this.

The picture contemplates a world in which the Jewish nation will be free from all oppression and under the rule of the Messiah. War is to be a thing of the past, and justice and righteousness are to be in supreme control of all human affairs. The Messiah is to be a paragon of power, wisdom, and love—a very God. This is all very much like what Haggai and Zechariah promised their people.

Isa. 11:1–9 may also belong to this general period. Its hopes are very much of the same order as the foregoing:

There will come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.
The spirit of Yahweh will rest upon him,
A spirit of wisdom and discernment,
A spirit of counsel and power,
A spirit of the knowledge and fear of Yahweh.
He will not give judgment according to what his eyes see;
Nor will he reprove according to what his ears hear;
But he will judge the poor in righteousness,
And he will reprove with equity the meek of the earth;
He will smite the violent with the rod of his mouth,
And with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.
Righteousness will be the girdle of his loins,
And fidelity the girdle of his waist.

The wolf will dwell with the lamb,
The leopard will lie down with the kid,
The calf, the young lion, and the fatling also,

And a little child will drive them.
The heifer and the bear will be friends,
Their young ones will lie down together,
And the lion will eat straw like an ox.
The suckling will play upon the hole of the adder,
And the child just weaned will put his hand on the serpent's lair.
They will not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain;
For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of Yahweh,
As the waters cover the sea.

The same unlimited idealism appears here as in Ezekiel and Isaiah, chapters 40–55, an idealism that was carried to its logical conclusion in the work of Haggai, Zechariah, and such writers as the author of this beautiful dream. Similar visions of a blessed future are presented in Isa. 32:1–8 and 33:17–24. Hopes like these gave Israel courage in days of darkness. It would almost seem that the darker the outlook, as seen by the eye of the ordinary man, the brighter and more glorious were the visions seen by the eye of faith.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CRY FOR VENGEANCE

In this chapter we bring together three pieces of prophetic literature, viz., Isaiah, chapters 56–66; the Book of Obadiah; and the Book of Malachi. The considerations for dating these writings are not as clear and definite as we should like. Their post-exilic character is beyond question; but as to the specific portion of the post-exilic period to which they belong there is room for considerable difference of opinion. Here we shall treat them as coming from the close of the long period of silence that came after the collapse of the boom for Zerubbabel as Messiah. They represent, in part, the spirit that found its outlet in the work of Nehemiah and Ezra, and probably belong in close proximity to the reform movement.

The chapters closing the Book of Isaiah are not easily handled as a unit. They rather represent the work of more than one prophet, being a collection of anonymous prophetic writings.[1] There is a noticeable lack of unity in the standpoints of the various chapters. But, in general, the situation which they all reflect is that of a people profoundly discouraged and in need of great stimulation. Consequently, much of the content of these chapters concerns itself with the task of inspiring a disheartened people. To that end were the prophecies uttered that promise disaster and destruction to the foes of Yahweh and of Judah. See, for example, Isa. 61:5 and 66:16–19. The

[1] For a discussion of the date of this material, see the commentaries on Isaiah, cited on p. 67.

most terrible and vindictive of these utterances is that in Isa. 63:1–6. This is a picture of Yahweh or his destroying angel coming up from Edom with his clothing reddened with the blood of those whom he has trampled to death. Such words as these show how the wrongs inflicted upon Judah in the time of its weakness by her neighbors, especially the Edomites, rankled in the bosom of the Jewish people. Nothing less than a bloody retribution would satisfy their lust for vengeance. On the other hand, in chap. 56:3–7 we find a contrary attitude toward the pagan world, which would open the doors of Yahweh's house to all nations:

> My house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

Certainly, those who would avail themselves of this hospitality must become proselytes to the Jewish faith. The two requirements made of them are that they shall observe the Jewish Sabbath and keep the covenant of Yahweh. This last item is apparently vague, but it probably implied compliance with the entire Jewish ritual and law. But the ritualistic interest did not eliminate the old ethical interest and passion of prophecy. Ritual is made of subordinate value as compared with ethics, in Isa. 58:3–7, 9 f.; 59:3, 4, 7, 12, 15; and 61:8. That an incorrect ritual was fraught with much evil is clear from the denunciations of idolatry and superstition in Isa. 57:1–9 and 65:1–7.

The people for whom these chapters were written were sunk deep in a slough of despond.

> Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not?
> Wherefore have we afflicted ourselves, and thou takest no heed?[1]

[1] Isa. 58:3.

That is the way in which they were thinking. Religion ought to pay good dividends; but the more religious they were the less they seemed to get. Why were they permitted to go on suffering oppression and wrong at the hands of their enemies? To such questions an answer was readily forthcoming from the prophets:

Yahweh's hand is not shortened so that it cannot save,
Nor is his ear heavy, so that it cannot hear.
But your iniquities have separated between you and your God.[1]

Therefore is justice far from us,
And justification does not overtake us.
We look for light, but behold darkness.
For brightness, but we walk in gloom.
We grope for the wall like the blind;
Yea, as they who have no eyes, do we grope;
We stumble at noonday as in the twilight;
We are in dark places like the dead.
We all growl like bears,
And mourn sore like doves;
We look for right, but there is none;
For deliverance, but it is far from us.[2]

One of the most touching expressions of plaintive protest in all literature is placed upon the lips of the Jewish community in the form of a prayer to Yahweh:

Look forth from the heavens and see,
From thy holy and beauteous dwelling;
Where are thy zeal and thy deeds of might?
The compassion of thy heart and thy mercies have been restrained for us.

For thou art our father!
Abraham has not known us,
Nor Israel recognized us.
Thou, O Yahweh, art our father,
"Our vindicator from of old" is thy name.

[1] Isa. 59:1, 2 [2] Isa. 59:9–11.

Why hast thou made us to wander from thy ways, O Yahweh?
Why dost thou harden our heart against the fear of thee?
Return, for the sake of thy servants,
The tribes of thine inheritance.

Wherefore did the wicked decimate thy saints?
Wherefore did our enemies trample upon thy sanctuary?
Why have we been as those over whom thou hast not ruled from of old,
And over whom thy name has not been called?

O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down!
That at thy presence the mountains might quake,
As when fire makes the water boil,
So as to make known thy name to thine enemies,
That the nations might tremble at thy presence.

When thou didst do terrible things which we did not expect,
Thou didst come down, the mountains quaked.
From of old they had not heard, nor given ear;
No eye has seen a god except thee,
Who works for him who waits for him.

Thou dost look with favor on those who do righteousness,
And remember thy ways;
But now thou art angry, for we have sinned,
And we have been wicked from of old.
And we are all of us like one unclean;
And all our righteousness is like a defiled garment;
And we do all fade like a leaf;
And our guilt carries us away like the wind.

There is no one calling upon thy name,
Or arousing himself to take hold of thee.
For thou hast hidden thy face from us;
And hast delivered us into the power of our guilt.

Now, O Yahweh, thou art our father;
We are the clay and thou art our potter;
And all of us are the work of thy hands.
Do not be angry with us, O Yahweh, exceedingly,
And do not remember our guilt forever.

But look now, we are all thy people!
Thy holy cities have been a wilderness;
Zion has been a wilderness; Jerusalem a desolation.
Our holy and beautiful house
Wherein our fathers praised thee
Was burned with fire;
And all our treasures were destroyed.
Wilt thou restrain thyself for these things, O Yahweh?
Wilt thou be silent, and afflict us exceedingly?[1]

This state of deep depression needs to be offset by words of correspondingly high anticipation. Such words are found in Isaiah, chapters 56–66, in abundance. There is no section of Hebrew literature in which the spirit of hopeful faith expresses itself more exultantly and beautifully than here. The darker the immediate situation was the brighter did the skies of the prophetic future shine. The pictures of the Golden Age painted in this period of gloom are familiar to all readers of the Bible. They are a challenge to the faint-hearted of any age. Such words are found all through the chapters, but are especially noteworthy in chapter 62; 65:8–25; and 66:20–23. The most beautiful vision of the future is found in chapter 60, of which a new rendering may be given:

Arise, shine, for thy light is come,
And the glory of Yahweh is risen upon thee!
For, behold, darkness covers the earth,
And dense darkness the peoples;
But upon thee Yahweh will arise,
And his glory will be seen upon thee;
And nations will come to thy light,
And kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Lift up thine eyes round about and see!
They are all assembling, they come to thee!

[1] Isa. 63:15—64–11.

Thy sons will come from far,
And thy daughters will be carried on the side.

Then thou wilt see and beam with joy;
Thy heart will be stirred and be enlarged.
For the riches of the sea will be turned unto thee;
The wealth of nations will come to thee.

A flood of camels will cover thee,
The young camels of Midian and Ephah;
They will all come from Sheba.
Gold and incense will they carry,
And the praises of Yahweh will they proclaim.

All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered unto thee,
The rams of Nebaioth will minister to thee;
They will come up with acceptance on mine altar,
And I will glorify my glorious house.

Who are these that fly as a cloud,
And as the doves to their cotes?
For the isles will wait for me,
With the ships of Tarshish in the lead,
To bring thy sons from far,
Their silver and their gold with them,
For the name of Yahweh, thy God,
And for the Holy One of Israel; for he has glorified thee.

And aliens will build thy walls,
And their kings will minister to thee;
For in my anger I smote thee,
And in my favor will I have mercy on thee.

And thy gates will be open continually,
Neither by day, nor by night will they be closed,
That the wealth of the nations may come to thee,
And their kings leading on.

For the nation or the kingdom that will not serve thee will perish;
The nations will be utterly destroyed.

The glory of Lebanon will come to thee,
The cypress, the cedar, and also the elm,
To glorify the place of my sanctuary,
That I may make the place of my feet glorious.

The sons of thy oppressors will come cringing unto thee,
And those who despised thee will prostrate themselves at the soles of thy feet.
And they will call thee the city of Yahweh,
The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Instead of thy being deserted and hated with no one passing by,
I will make thee an everlasting majesty,
A joy to generations to come.
Thou shalt suck the milk of the nations;
And at the breast of kings thou shalt suck.
Thou shalt know that I Yahweh am thy deliverer,
And that thy vindicator is the mighty one of Jacob.

Instead of bronze, I will bring gold;
Instead of iron, I will bring silver;
Instead of wood, I will bring bronze,
And instead of stones, iron.
I will make thy government peace,
And thy taskmasters righteousness.
There will not be heard any longer in thy land violence,
Destruction, nor devastation in thy boundaries;
But thou wilt call thy walls, "Deliverance,"
And thy gates, "Praise."

The sun will be no more thy light by day,
Nor will the moon give thee light for brightness;
But Yahweh will be thy everlasting light,
And thy God thy glory.

Thy sun will no more set,
Nor will thy moon be gathered up;
But Yahweh will be thy everlasting light,
And the days of thy mourning will be completed.

Thy people will be all of them righteous,
Forever will they possess the land,
The branch of my planting, the work of my hands to be glorified.
The little one will become a thousand;
And the small one, a strong people;
If Yahweh will hasten it in its time.

The little Book of Obadiah is in its original elements a product of this same general period. It reflects bitter hatred against Edom and a burning desire for vengeance upon that land and people. The first five verses of Obadiah appear also in Jer. 49:9, 14–16. It is pretty generally granted now that they were original with Obadiah, and were therefore borrowed by the editors who produced the present Book of Jeremiah. The Book of Obadiah is itself the product of editorial activity. The original prophecy seems to have consisted of verses 1–7*e* and 10–14, 15*b*. The remaining verses also deal with Edom, but seem to reflect a later eschatological point of view.[1]

The acts of Edom that called forth the spirit of vengeance seen in Isaiah, chapter 63, Obadiah, and Malachi are also spoken of in Ezekiel, chapter 35, Ps. 137:7, and Lam. 4:21 f. The writer of Obadiah seems to be aware of a movement that is on foot having for its end an attack upon Edom. He contemplates this outlook with undisguised satisfaction. He sees in the coming onslaught the divine purpose to punish Edom for its share in the humiliation and robbery of Judah at the time of the overthrow by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. In verses 10–14 he chides Edom for its reprehensible conduct on that occasion, and in verse 15*b* he threatens her with a similar fate to that

[1] For an introduction to Obadiah, see J. A. Bewer, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (1922), pp. 251 f.; F. C. Eiselen, *The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament*, II (1923), 430–39.

which she helped inflict upon Judah; she will reap what she has sown. This portion of the book seems to reflect an actual historical situation; the remainder of the book deals with eschatological pictures rather than historical realities. Both parts alike look upon an adequate revenge upon Edom as an indispensable part of the divine program. This is practically the sole interest of the book; the later writer does take a brief glimpse at the nations at large whom he would subject to the same fate as Edom, but Edom is his first and last concern. The spirit of such writings is easily understood, and is not wholly without warrant; but it is unworthy of the best standards of the great prophets.

The Book of Malachi reflects the same attitude toward Edom, but differs from Obadiah in two main particulars. Malachi does not look forward to a punishment upon Edom, but regards it as already accomplished. Further, Edom's fate is not his supreme concern; he passes on, after a brief allusion to Edom, to other matters that are closer at hand and of more immediate importance.[1] The Book of Malachi is thus a bit later in origin than Obadiah, but still belongs in the period of gloom and discouragement, prior to the reform movement under Nehemiah and Ezra.

The author of Malachi sets himself to the task of encouraging his people and of quickening their faith. He recognizes clearly the state of mind of his contemporaries, and meets them on their own level. He himself is full of courage and enthusiasm, and is dominated by an invin-

[1] For an introduction to and detailed interpretation of the Book of Malachi, see J. M. Powis Smith, *Malachi* ("International Critical Commentary," 1912).

cible faith. These attitudes he seeks to awaken in the minds and hearts of his people.

The prophet's generation was skeptically minded. They were saying that Yahweh evidently had no love for his people, their sad situation was demonstration enough of that proposition. In the opening section of the book, the prophet gives a proof that Yahweh does love Judah. He finds that proof in a recent disaster that has befallen the people of Edom. How can Judah say that Yahweh does not love her when she has before her eyes the devastation of Edom? Is not punishment of Edom irrefutable proof that Yahweh loves his people? It is quite evident that the attitude of the Jews was essentially this: "Anybody who injures Edom is our friend."[1] This is exactly the attitude of hatred toward Edom that we have seen in Isaiah, chapter 63, and in Obadiah.

In the next section of this prophecy[2] one of the reasons why Judah has not enjoyed prosperity is clearly pointed out. It lies in the fact that the performance of the ritual has been grossly neglected. How can Judah expect to be favored by Yahweh when she has failed to give Yahweh his due? They have been careless and indifferent in the arrangements and provisions for sacrifice. The exiled communities in Egypt and elsewhere have organized a worship in the heart of the pagan world that puts the worship of the mother-Temple in Jerusalem to shame. The priests themselves who ought to be the guardians of the purity of the altar have winked at irregularities and said: "What is the difference?"

A second reason for the absence of Yahweh's favor is formulated by the prophet in 2:10–16. This, to our mod-

[1] Mal. 1:2–5. [2] Mal. 1:6—2:9.

ern minds, is much more serious, but was not necessarily so to the contemporaries of the prophet himself. The men of Judah have been perpetrating a great social wrong. They have been indulging in the practice of heartless divorce. They are in the habit of discarding the wives they married in their youth and filling their places with alien women who are addicted to idolatry. These marriages were probably dictated by ambition for wealth or influence, and were in absolute defiance of every feeling of justice or fair play, not to speak of love. How can the Jews expect Yahweh to accept their sacrifices, carelessly offered at the best, when the cries of the expelled wives are continually sounding in his ears?

A third difficulty in the way of the free outpouring of the grace of Yahweh is stated in 2:17—3:6. It is found in the skeptical state of mind prevalent among the Jews. They have been thinking and saying that God has no interest in the execution of justice, that he does not discriminate in his treatment between the righteous and the wicked. To that charge the prophet replies that the Day of Yahweh is near at hand. In that great and awful Day, Yahweh will come with cleansing fire and clean out the wicked from the priesthood so that the sacrifices may once more be acceptable, as in days gone by. But the cleansing process will not stop at the Temple, but will go forth throughout the land doing away with all social wrongs, personal sins, and all doers of injustice. Only the unchanging goodness of Yahweh will keep the Jews from total destruction.

Another obstacle in the way of the manifestation of Yahweh's love is presented in 3:7–12. The Jewish people are wholly unreasonable in expecting Yahweh to bless

them when they have robbed him of his natural rights. Tithes and offerings belong to Yahweh; but they have been withheld. The indispensable prerequisite to the granting of the divine blessing is that they shall bring the whole tithe into the storehouse. Then will blessings be poured out so abundantly that there will be no room to store them away. The forces of nature will work unhindered to fill the coffers of Jewry, and the nations of the earth will look with envy upon Judah as the beloved of Yahweh.

The last difficulty encountered by Yahweh in his desire to bless his people appears in 3:13—4:3. It is a part of the skepticism already dealt with. The people are saying that religion does not pay; for those who flout it are in enjoyment of prosperity, while the pious are poor and wretched. To these complaints, the response is that conditions are about to change. The Day of Yahweh is near at hand, when the destructive wrath of Yahweh will fall upon the wicked, utterly destroying them; while prosperity and power will be granted the pious. They will hold sway over the godless, and will enjoy intimate fellowship with Yahweh himself.

The closing section of the Book of Malachi is a later editorial addition. It presupposes the authority of the Mosaic Law and promises a preliminary work of reconciliation between parents and children to be carried through by the prophet Elijah, who will return to the earth before the coming of the great and terrible Day of Yahweh. This work must be done lest Yahweh should on his great Day "smite the earth with a curse."

We might very well have called this chapter "The Decline of Prophecy." There are some great conceptions

expressed by these writers. But the range is narrow and the air is heavy. We are dealing not with realities, but with the "stuff that dreams are made of." The stir and energy of the great prophets are gone. The existence of independent nationality was vital to the well-being of prophecy. When the nation as such died, prophecy received its death sentence. The post-exilic prophets were but feeble echoes of the great voices of the past.

CHAPTER XIV

A CALL TO WORLD-WIDE SERVICE

The reform effected by Nehemiah and Ezra was not carried by the support of all the people. It involved an exclusive, nationalistic, Jewish spirit that did not commend it to some of the more generous minds. A powerful protest against the particularistic spirit of the movement, with its opposition to the entrance of any foreigner into the Jewish circle, was voiced in a campaign document which has reached us as the Book of Jonah. This writing was called forth by the movement toward exclusion of foreigners, and is to be thought of as having arisen in close connection with the reform, either before it was actually adopted, or after its effects were beginning to be evident.[1]

The book was not written by Jonah, but about Jonah. There actually was a prophet by the name of Jonah; see II Kings 14:25. This prophet lived in the days of Jeroboam II, or just before his reign, and was credited with having foretold the conquests of that king. He therefore belonged not in the class of men like Amos and Hosea, who criticized the government, but is rather to be thought of as a popular prophet who supported the policies of the king and promised him success and prosperity. Such a prophet therefore would have been an opponent of men like Amos and Hosea.

[1] For an introduction to the Book of Jonah, see J. A. Bewer, *Jonah* ("International Critical Commentary," 1912); and F. C. Eiselen, *The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament*, II (1923), 439–71.

The Book of Jonah was written long after the death of Jonah. It is clear from the way in which Nineveh is mentioned that the city was no longer standing. Nineveh was destroyed in 612 B.C. The writer of the book was not acquainted with the size of the city, or with the extent of its population. The ruins of the place as laid bare by modern excavators show that the circumference of the town was not more than $7\frac{1}{2}$, or at most, 8 miles. Yet the book speaks of Jonah as going into the city a day's journey before he began to preach. That would have taken him clear through Nineveh as it actually was. Similarly, it is clear that the population of Jonah's Nineveh cannot have been less than 500,000. But the total area of the real Nineveh was about 1,800 acres. When we recall that the modern skyscraper was not known and that the houses of the ancient world were prevailingly one-story buildings, we recognize the difficulty of housing a half-million people on 1,800 acres. Furthermore, the language of Jonah is that characteristic of the late period of Hebrew history, and the thought is likewise too generous and all inclusive to belong to the intensely nationalistic pre-exilic period. These things all combine to place the book in the middle of the fifth century B.C., or thereabouts.

The Book of Jonah is a story told to convey to the reader a great idea. The pedagogic value of the story-telling method is clearly recognized today. The parables of Jesus are the best-known elements of his message. Those parables are not plain, prosaic records of actual episodes in the life of Jesus. They are the product of his imagination. They were illuminated and energized by going through the mind of Jesus. He did not tell his hearers a definite and specific incident that he or they had just

seen. He created a typical episode or incident that gathered up into itself all that was vital and essential in the kind of experience that he was employing for the purpose of his message. The parables, therefore, were not true transcripts of actual deeds and words; they were true to the truth of common experience, but were not verbatim reports or photographic plates of reality. Indeed, it is not at all necessary that a story should be literally true in order to have great value for moral and spiritual ends. Charles Dickens did much to reform the iniquitous private schools of England in his day by writing a novel, *Nicholas Nickleby*, in which he caricatured and thus made vivid to the minds of many readers the pettiness, stupidity, and brutality of those places of torment. Harriet Beecher Stowe did not give actual history in her novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, but her story stirred to indignation the minds of thousands of northerners who actually knew next to nothing about the real condition of the slave. Mrs. Stowe's book was an exaggeration, but was no less effective on that account. So, likewise, the Book of Jonah sought to teach a great truth, and the value of the story it tells is not in any sense dependent upon the dimensions of a whale's gullet.

We shall follow the story through, noting the progress of the thought. Jonah, the prophet, living at Gath-hepher, on the edge of the Philistines' territory, felt himself called to prophesy at Nineveh in the name of Yahweh. At once he turned in the opposite direction, went down to Joppa, and took ship there for Tarshish, the farthest possible port from Nineveh. No sooner had the ship set sail than Yahweh hurled a violent wind upon the sea and the waves were wrought to a great fury, so that "the ship thought

that it was going to be broken to pieces." The sailors cried out to their various gods in terror, and set to work to lighten ship by casting overboard everything that was loose. Meantime, Jonah had gone down into the hold, where he was lying fast asleep, worn out by the fatigue of his hasty flight from his duty. The captain hunted him out and reproached him for not being awake and engaged in praying to his God that they all might be saved. Not knowing what else to do, the sailors began to cast lots, that they might learn who was responsible for their sad plight. The lot fell upon Jonah, who then proceeded to tell them what he had done to cause the great storm. This account made the sailors terrified, and they besought Jonah to tell them how they might placate his angry God. Jonah, stricken with remorse, urged them to put him over the side and let the ocean swallow him up. This is the only decent thing that Jonah did in the entire story. But the sailors, pagans as they were, were unwilling to toss away a man's life in that fashion; so they rowed hard to bring the ship to land but all to no avail. Thereupon the reluctant sailors, breathing a prayer to Jonah's God for forgiveness for what he had compelled them to do, tossed Jonah to the angry waves, which at once subsided from their fury, so that the sea became once more calm. The sailors were amazed and at once offered a sacrifice to Yahweh and made vows to be performed when they reached shore. This is the first stage of the story, and it ends with the fact that the idolatrous heathen sailors recognized the power of Yahweh, the Hebrew God, and vowed service to him. It may be noticed at this point that the story so far has seen the performance of three miracles, viz., (1) the sending of the

strong wind at the requisite time and place; (2) the direction of the lot so that it fell upon Jonah, the guilty man; and (3) the sudden cessation of the storm as soon as Jonah hit the surface of the water. It is a story which, if taken literally, is full of the miraculous. The moment anything passes out of the sphere of the natural, that moment it ceases to be susceptible of human measurements or standards of any sort. So the Book of Jonah is not a book of one miracle, but of a series of miracles.

Meantime, what about Jonah? "Yahweh ordained a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." Nothing is said here about a whale; the "whale" appears for the first time in Matt. 12:40. If it be insisted that we take this story as literal history, it is evident that we are shut up to no particular variety of fish by this narrative. It was a fish set apart by Yahweh for this particular purpose, and we must suppose that it was adapted to the purpose it was intended to subserve. If necessary, Yahweh was thought quite capable of making a fish to suit his purpose, and that may have been the case here; the language permits this, though it does not definitely say it. In any case, we need not worry ourselves about the dimensions of a whale, no matter how literal we wish to be. The whole episode is miraculous, and can be tied down by no human or piscatorial limitations. In the interior of the fish, Jonah had abundant time and food for thought. The result was that he prayed to Yahweh in contrition and penitence, so that Yahweh spoke to the fish, which at once "vomited Jonah out upon the dry land." Here the series of miracles is again increased.

Jonah, once more upon *terra firma*, is again ordered to

Nineveh, and this time he responds to the call. He entered the city finally and began to send forth his cry: "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be destroyed." The entire city took the threat seriously and betook itself to mourning. From king to slave the whole population entered upon a fast, put sackcloth upon their loins, and cried aloud to God for mercy. Even the beasts of the city were included in the observance of this strict régime. God heard the cry of the city and relented from his dread purpose to destroy the city. But this was too much for Jonah, who was greatly displeased and disappointed by the apparent outcome of his mission. He therefore prayed God to take his life from him, saying that he was better off dead than alive. But Yahweh simply said to him with gentle irony: "Are you very angry, Jonah?"

Thereupon Jonah went out of the city to the east and made a booth under which he seated himself, waiting and hoping against hope that he might, after all, see the destruction of the heathen city. But Yahweh miraculously provided a gourd which grew up over Jonah's hut and furnished him a grateful protection from the fierce heat. Scarcely had he had time to appreciate the gourd when God sent a worm which smote the gourd, so that it died. To make matters worse, God sent a sultry, stifling east wind which Jonah found unbearably trying. Again his sullen cry for death was heard, and once more came the gentle irony of God: "Are you very angry on account of the gourd?" And Jonah replied that he was angry to the point of death.

Then Yahweh turned upon him with crushing force, saying:

> You have had pity on the gourd, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow; it came up over night and perished over

night. And ought I not to have pity on Nineveh that great city, wherein are more than 120,000 persons who cannot distinguish their right hand from their left hand; and likewise much cattle?

These 120,000 represent babies. Jonah, the disgruntled and discredited prophet, sits out there soured upon life because Yahweh has not seen fit to wipe out 120,000 babies at one fell stroke together with the rest of the great population. What a revolting picture! How narrow, how small, how inhuman Jonah looks!

What is the bearing of the story on the situation in which it was written? The story is a parable, or allegory, of the history of Judah. Jonah represents the people of Judah. They were set in the world to make the goodness and justice of God known to all nations. They failed utterly to realize or accept their task. Therefore they were cast into exile, where they stayed until they came to some consciousness of their iniquity. Finally, they were brought back home to Judah and given another chance to carry out their world-wide mission. But, like Jonah, they went about their work in a bitter and revengeful spirit, and were therefore open to severe rebuke and criticism.

This story was called forth by the reform movement, which sought to eliminate all non-Jews from Judah and to keep the people of Yahweh pure and unsullied by contact with alien peoples. Instead of desiring the conversion of the nations to Yahweh, they were beseeching Yahweh for destructive vengeance upon the nations. The picture of Jonah frowning upon Nineveh was none too strong for the facts.

The Book of Jonah thus becomes a great missionary tract. It is a plea for a human brotherhood that knows no national barriers and has room for no racial animosities or

antipathies. Far from being a mere "fish-story" to be laughed at, it is a great missionary challenge. It carries on splendidly the great message of the "Servant of Yahweh Songs." It puts to shame all petty human limitations and confidently declares that

> The love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind,
> And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

CHAPTER XV

A NEW OUTBURST OF PROPHECY

We gather up here in one bouquet the last fading flowers of prophecy. The books containing them are Joel; Zechariah, chapters 9–14; and Isaiah, chapters 24–27. The dates of them cannot be precisely determined. But that they are all post-exilic is beyond successful contradiction; and that they all come from the early part of the Greek period of Jewish history is generally conceded. Alexander the Great overthrew Darius III at Issus in 333 B.C., and Greece succeeded to the mastery of the oriental world. The aim of Alexander and his successors was not merely to acquire territory and conquer armies, but rather to conquer minds and cultures. The invasion of arms was but one step in the invasion of thought and life. The aim was to found a new Greece in Asia, to enlarge the Greek world. To this end strenuous efforts were put forth. Greek cities were founded in Asia Minor and Syria and Palestine. Greek customs, language, laws, and religion became the standard. Small comfort was given to the native cultures and faiths. This was all in striking contrast to the attitude of the former Persian government, which had in general shown itself tolerant and kindly to all native institutions. If the Jews had felt themselves under an alien hand when the Persians ruled them, how much more did they so feel under the Greeks! The Jewish and the Semitic world had passed into the hands of men "who knew not Joseph."

In this group of prophecies coming from the Greek period, it is noteworthy that the interests of the prophets are of a quite different sort from those of their great predecessors. The prophets of the days gone by had concerned themselves primarily with current issues. They had sought to encourage their contemporaries in the doing of justice and in acts of mercy. They had wrestled with the problems of national and international politics of their own age. They had tried to build a new social order in which righteousness should reign supreme. But these writers have transferred their interests from the present to the future. They have lost hope in the possibility of remaking the present political and social order and are looking to the days to come for the Golden Age to dawn. Their interests are no longer ethical and social; they are eschatological. They despair of the present, and hope for the future.

The two great topics of the book of Joel[1] are the plague of locusts and the Day of Yahweh. The prophecies were perhaps called forth by the events attending the downfall of the Persian Empire, somewhere in the middle of the fourth century B.C. The two series of sermons on the plague and on the Day of Yahweh have been bound together by editorial hands. The plague of locusts was itself quite serious enough to have started a prophet to preach. For the prophets the laws of nature were the laws of God; and anything that was at all out of the usual run of things was interpreted as a direct intervention of God in human affairs.

[1] For an introduction to Joel see J. A. Bewer, *Joel* ("International Critical Commentary," 1912); and F. C. Eiselen, *The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament*, II (1923), 380–404.

Perhaps his first address is found in chapter 2. Verses 1*a*, 2, and 9, 10, are the work of the later editor, who sees in the locust plague a threatened Day of Yahweh. But the prophet is here talking about actual locusts and the devastation they were working. He pictures the land as looking like a region that has been swept by fire. He vividly describes the locusts themselves in terms of the movements of an invading army sweeping everything before it. He regards this destructive scourge as a visitation of the wrath of God sent upon the Jewish people in punishment for its sins.[1] He therefore sends forth a call to repentance.[2]

Again, in 1:2–14, 16–20, he gives a vivid and powerful description of the havoc and consternation wrought by the locusts; and once more sends forth his call to an assembly for fasting and prayer:

Hear this, you old men;
And listen, all you inhabitants of the land.
Has there ever been anything like this in your days,
Or in the days of your fathers?

Tell of it to your children,
And your children in turn to their children,
And their children to the following generations.

What the cutter left, the destroyer has eaten;
And what the destroyer left, the leaper has eaten;
And what the leaper left, the finisher[3] has eaten.

[1] For a vivid description of the actual plague of locusts that swept over Judah and Jerusalem in 1914 A.D., see the article by John Whiting, *National Geographic Magazine* (December, 1915). It is there pointed out how strikingly accurate in his description of locusts this writer was.

[2] Joel 2:1*a*, 3, 9, 12–14.

[3] These four epithets all are descriptive of the locusts.

Wake up, you drunkards, and weep,
And wail, all you drinkers of wine,
For the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouths.

For a nation has come up against my land;
Strong and innumerable.
His teeth are those of the lion;
And he has the fangs of a lioness.

He has made my vine a ruin,
And my fig-tree a dry stick.
He has stripped it bare and cast it out;
Its vines are whitened.

Wail, like a virgin girded with sackcloth,
For the husband of her youth.
Sacrifice and libation are cut off from the house of Yahweh;
The priests, the ministers of Yahweh, mourn.

The field is devastated; the ground mourns;
Because the corn is ruined, the new wine is parched, the olive wilts;
The ploughmen are ashamed, the vinedressers wail,
For the wheat and for the barley,
Because the increase of the field is lost.

The vine is dried up and the fig-tree wilts;
The pomegranate, the palm, and the apple-tree,
All the trees of the field are withered;
So that joy is withered away from the sons of men.

Gird yourselves and lament, O you priests;
Wail, you ministers of the altar.
Come, spend the night in sackcloth, you ministers of my God;
Because sacrifice and libation are withheld from the house of your God.
Is not the food cut off before our eyes,
From the house of our God, mirth and joy?

Waste are the granaries, ruined are the barns,
Because the corn is dried up;
What shall we put in them?

The herds of cattle wander about,
For there is no pasture for them.
The flocks of sheep, too, are destroyed.

Unto thee, O Yahweh, do I call,
For fire has devoured the pastures of the open country,
And flame has burned all the trees of the field.
The beasts of the field also pant unto thee,
For the streams of water are dried up,
And fire has devoured the pastures of the open country.

In response to the urgent appeal of Joel, the people, led by the priests, called a meeting and proclaimed a fast.[1] They went into this penitential movement with the enthusiasm born of despair, willing to do anything to escape the ills under which they were suffering. In due time, the locusts passed on; and the invincible life-force in nature began to assert itself once more. Over this change of condition the prophet rejoices, and for it he praises God.[2]

The rest of the book is concerned with the terrors of the coming Day of Yahweh. Its dawn will be attended by great psychical disturbances in the minds of men, so that old and young will be seeing visions and dreaming dreams. Thereupon will great wonders be manifested in the heavens and on earth, and great destructive powers let loose from which only those who worship Yahweh will escape.[3]

The great Day will see the gathering in the homeland of the Jews from all parts of the world. Likewise, the nations are to be assembled there in the valley of Jehoshaphat where Yahweh will enter into judgment with them for their past sins. As they have done to Judah so shall it be done to them. They sold the Jews into captivity in far countries; they themselves will be sold in like manner

[1] Joel 2:14 ff. [2] Joel 2:18–27. [3] Joel 2:28–32.

to distant peoples.[1] The nations will gather in innumerable force for battle in the valley of Jehoshaphat, where Yahweh will overthrow them with his cataclysmic terrors. But Judah and Jerusalem will be recipients of the favor of Yahweh whose abode will be in Mount Zion.[2] It may be noticed here that Joel is dependent upon Ezekiel for this idea of the concentration of the nations for punishment in the land of Israel.

The same type of thought and hope appears in Zechariah, chapters 9–14.[3] The questions as to unity and authorship raised by these chapters cannot be discussed here. The text is split up into many sections, but the same general spirit and point of view dominate throughout. There may be contained in this collection of chapters oracles from several hands, but they are all concerned about the same things and they entertain the same hopes and fears.

Destruction from Yahweh is foretold for all the peoples of the coast-lands; but Judah and Jerusalem are guaranteed safety by the presence of Yahweh.[4] The Messiah is coming in triumph, though riding upon an animal emblematic of the peace he has conquered for his people. His dominion will be world-wide. He will make the Jews victorious over the Greeks and will crown their land with prosperity.[5] Yahweh will bless the land with fertility, and will lead forth his people to victory over their foes. The people of Northern Israel, long since carried into exile,

[1] Joel 3:1–8.

[2] Joel 3:9–21.

[3] For discussion of the date of these chapters, see H. G. Mitchell, *Haggai and Zechariah* (1912), pp. 232–59; and F. C. Eiselen, *The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament*, II (1923), 560–83.

[4] Zech. 9:1–8. [5] Zech. 9:9–17.

and, as a matter of fact, lost by assimilation with the population among whom they had settled down, are nevertheless to be brought back and united with the Jews once more as the people of Yahweh. The great nations are to be overthrown, and the people of Yahweh will dwell in triumphant security.[1]

In chapter 11, we seem to have an allegory in which the prophet is describing conditions as they actually were in his day. He dare not single out the Greek ruler and denounce him openly, but he does it with safety in this cryptic fashion. He seems to have, in part, at least, acted out the part of a shepherd who had been given charge of a flock of sheep, but proved faithless to his charge, leaving the sheep to the cruel mercies of robbers and fleecers. He represents the shepherd as deliberately breaking the staves that were the symbols of his responsibility, and thereby repudiating all responsibility for the welfare of the flock. He then shows the shepherd as claiming his reward from those who had enriched themselves by his connivance, and as having been given only the value of a mere slave. This the shepherd deposited in the treasury for safekeeping. This was all apparently a picture of the attitude of the king in the prophet's own time, who failed utterly in his duties as protector of his people and left them to the extortions of tax collectors and other underlings. Perhaps the king in question was Ptolemy III (246 B.C.), to whom the Jews were subject.[2] The prophet seems to have passed on from him to his son, Ptolemy IV,[3] and to have

[1] Zech. 10:1–12.

[2] It has been suggested that 11:6 is a gloss and that the three shepherds there symbolize Antiochus III, Seleucus IV, and Heliodorus; see Mitchell, *loc. cit.*

[3] Zech. 11:15 ff.

represented him as even worse than his father. But after a period of fiery trial[1] the false shepherd will fall and the sorely afflicted and decimated people will find rest under the protection of Yahweh.

In 12:1—13:6, the familiar thought of the nations being gathered against Jerusalem again appears. But Jerusalem will spell disaster and destruction for all of them. An interesting light is cast upon the political jealousies of the writer's times when it is said that the countryside of Judah is to be given the priority in the victorious campaign lest Jerusalem and its leaders should get too much glory as compared with the rest of the land. A part of the work of the messianic age is to involve a change of heart in the people of Jerusalem so that they will repent of their wickedness and mourn for their sins. Allusion is made in 12:10 to some victim of the people's violence in days gone by for whom in their new and penitent frame of mind the people will be stricken with grief and remorse. The identity of this victim cannot be recognized; the only thing clear is that the event had already occurred when this prophet wrote. Another fact of interest is the attitude of this prophet toward the prophets of his time. He evidently looked upon them as a bad lot, and foresaw the day as close at hand when their true character would be generally known, with the result that no man would be willing to be known as a prophet, but would blatantly deny the fact if he did belong to that class.

The fourteenth chapter is a collection of apocalyptic wonders and terrors. The city will be attacked and captured by the nations, who will carry into exile half of its population. But Yahweh will take the field against the

[1] Zech. 13:7 ff.

nations, taking up his position on the Mount of Olives to the east of the city. Thereupon the Mount of Olives will be cleft asunder, one-half of it moving to the north and the other to the south, thus opening up a valley in the midst of it. Not only so, but the regular order of day and night will be set aside and will give way to continuous daylight. To add to the delights of the new Jerusalem, a perennial stream will spring up therein and will flow in two directions, half of it toward the Mediterranean and half of it toward the Dead Sea. The topography of Jerusalem is also to be changed radically in another particular. Whereas the real Jerusalem was and is surrounded by hills and valleys, the new city is to be the center of a great plain, stretching out from it in all directions. The nations that attacked Jerusalem and vanquished her in the past are to fall a prey to a devastating disease, their bodies rotting away and falling to pieces where they stand. Civil war also will set in among them. So Jerusalem will be rendered secure, and will become the holy center to which all the peoples of the earth that survive will come as pilgrims to keep the feast of tabernacles. If they fail to come to that feast, rain will be withheld from upon them; but in Egypt, where rain is unknown, the punishment will be the failure of the Nile to overflow. Everything in and about the Temple of Yahweh will be holy, even the pots and pans. But traders will be unknown in the house of Yahweh.

The third of our prophets is represented by chapters 24–27 of the Book of Isaiah.[1] These chapters are made up

[1] For date and authorship, see G. B. Gray, *Isaiah* ("International Critical Commentary," 1912), pp. 397–404; Eiselen, *The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament*, I (1923), 167–73.

of two types of material, viz., prophetico-apocalypse and lyrical poetry. The first of these includes Isa. 21:1–23; 25:6–8; 26:20—27:1; 27:12, 13. The second stratum is Isa. 25:1–5, 9–12; 26:1–19; 27:2–11. These may be from different authors, but the general tone and content of the two strands are very much alike.

The apocalypticist looks for a complete overthrow of the existing social order of the world. This great catastrophe is to be sent upon the earth in punishment of the sins of the nations. But Yahweh will reign supreme in Zion and his people will be undisturbed. Not merely so, but the prosperity of Jerusalem is to be so great as to make the city the cynosure of all eyes. Best of all, in that city the last great enemy, Death, is to be vanquished.[1] While the great punishment of the nations is taking place, the Jews are to shut themselves up in Jerusalem in their houses and so escape falling under Yahweh's scourge. The exiles will then return home from all countries whither they have been scattered, and will gather to worship Yahweh in Jerusalem.[2]

The lyric poet sings a song of gratitude to Yahweh for the overthrow of the nations that he sees about to come. Moab, in particular, is to be laid low. He rejoices in the strength of Zion made strong by Yahweh's presence. He extols the faith of the pious and exhorts to a continuance thereof. He makes acknowledgment of the people's indebtedness to Yahweh, who has done for them that for which they had waited and hoped so long. The foes of Judah are dead and will stay dead. His mind reverts to the past when Judah had anxiously waited and prayed and nothing seemed to have been accomplished. But he

[1] Isa. 24:1–23; 25:6–8. [2] Isa. 26:20—27:1 and 27:12 f.

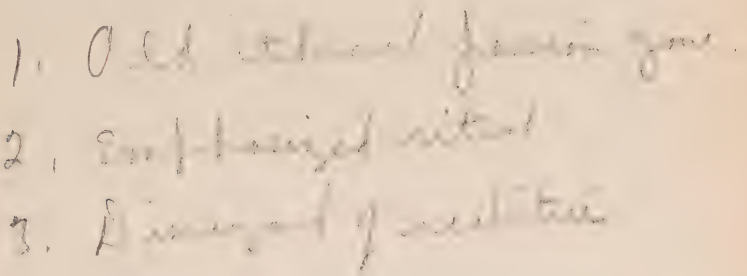
leaps from these sad memories to buoyant hope, and declares that while the foes of Judah are permanently laid low, the Jews who have died in the long struggle will come to life again and resume their places upon earth in bodily form.[1]

His last song[2] is a reminiscence of Isaiah's "Song of the Vineyard" in Isaiah, chapter 5. But here the vineyard is assured of Yahweh's constant care and protection. All who would encroach upon it are destined to be destroyed; and the vineyard will supply the whole world with fruit. The remaining verses[3] are foreign to the foregoing song and to the following apocalypse, and seem, therefore, an independent fragment. They seem to claim that the punishment of Judah was not so severe as that of the foes of Judah. The city and fortress of this foe is to be laid in ruins and turned into pasture land, because the inhabitants refused to be instructed of Yahweh.

It is characteristic of the apocalyptic material and point of view so largely adopted by these three groups of prophecies that they are primarily eschatological in their interpretation of their situation. They have lost hope of any human change in their condition. They are intently looking forward to the intervention of Yahweh by a sudden irruption into human affairs. The existing order is to be done away with. The outlook for the future is throughout universal in that it reckons with both Judah and the world at large. It is clearly recognized that the fate of Judah cannot be settled apart from the lot of the nations. But Judah is destined to take the lead of the new world as representative of Yahweh upon earth. The nations are to receive a well-deserved punishment. But this

[1] Isa. 25:1–5, 9–12; 26:1–19. [2] Isa. 27:2–6. [3] Isa. 27:7–11.

punishment is revoltingly cruel in some of its features. The old ethical passion of the great prophets has almost wholly disappeared. Ritual comes in for a much larger recognition than it ever received at the hands of the great masters. One outstanding feature of these writers is their absolute disregard of realities. Their pictures of the future are drawn with no reference to the world as it was in their day. They did not even feel themselves bound by geographical and geological limitations. In this, as in other things, they were the spiritual children of Ezekiel, the "father of Judaism."



CHAPTER XVI

DANIEL AND THE MACCABEES

We cannot here take space for a discussion of the arguments for the Maccabean date of the Book of Daniel. We must be content with referring the reader to the excellent discussions of the subject already available.[1] Suffice it to say that the historical inaccuracies in the statements regarding the exilic and earlier post-exilic periods, and also in those dealing with the post-Maccabean age, on the one hand, and the minute and detailed knowledge that the book displays of the Maccabean period, on the other hand, combine to make the case for the Maccabean origin of the book practically irrefutable.

The historical situation out of which the Book of Daniel came may be briefly sketched. Antiochus IV was on the throne of Syria, and therefore was the king to whom the Jews were subject. Antiochus was an ambitious but vain ruler. He gloried in the title "Epiphanes," i.e., the Manifest One; but some of his suffering subjects preferred to call him "Epimanes," i.e., the Madman. He was desirous of hastening the process of Hellenizing the Orient. That process had already gone far, and was still moving rapidly; but not rapidly enough to satisfy the demand of the vainglorious king. He therefore sought to achieve his end

[1] See, e.g., S. R. Driver, *Daniel* (Cambridge Bible, 1900); R. H. Charles, *Daniel* (New Century Bible, 1912); G. B. Gray, *Critical Introduction to the Old Testament* (1913); F. C. Eiselen, *The Psalms and Other Sacred Writings* (1918), pp. 251–88. For the traditional point of view, see R. D. Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (1917).

by force. He came to the throne of Syria in 175 B.C. A quarrel arose with Egypt over the possession of Palestine which wound up in war in 173 B.C. Antiochus prevailed and penetrated Egypt itself as far as Alexandria, from the siege of which Antiochus was recalled by matters of pressing importance at home. On the way back, he stopped at Jerusalem. Trouble had broken out there between the party desirous of holding fast to the old Hebrew traditions and the opposing party that sought to liberalize Judaism, and to ape the Greeks as much as possible. Antiochus soon after his accession had deposed Onias, the high priest, a representative of the Hebrew element, and had put in his place Jason, who was more amenable to the desires of Antiochus and had paid him a heavy bribe for the position. Jason had established a Greek gymnasium almost under the shadow of the Temple itself. This became a popular place, and the very priests in their eagerness to participate in the sports neglected their official duties.

The party of Onias naturally resented this sort of thing, and the two groups came to blows. Onias was driven from the city in flight to Egypt. But Jason was not left to enjoy the fruits of his victory. Menelaus, who was not a member of the priestly order, offered Antiochus, who was still in Egypt, a larger bribe than Jason had given; and Menelaus naturally was given the position. This Jason resented violently, and organizing a force he captured Menelaus and imprisoned him in the citadel. To put these fighting malcontents in their place, Antiochus made his side trip to Jerusalem (170 B.C.). While there he plundered the Temple of its treasure, which was probably his main motive in visiting the city, and put a

large number of the citizens to death. But two years later worse things befell the city. Antiochus had invaded Egypt again only to be met by a Roman legate who commanded him in the name of the Senate to return home. The Roman power was too formidable to be openly flouted. Hence Antiochus returned in bad humor to his own land (168 B.C.). Very soon thereafter he turned his attention again to Jerusalem. This time he went to work in earnest to turn the Jews into Greeks, or at least to turn them from the worship of Yahweh to the worship of Zeus. He had a Greek altar erected on top of the altar of burnt-offering (December, 168 B.C.). Here sacrifices were to be made to Zeus. This is what the writer of Daniel calls "the abomination of desolation." He placed a Syrian garrison in the citadel of Jerusalem, and destroyed the walls of the city. He issued decrees prohibiting the practice of circumcision, the offering of sacrifice to Yahweh, the reading and possession of the Jewish Scriptures, the observance of the Sabbath, and other rites of Yahwism. He sent a commission throughout the cities and villages of Palestine to destroy all evidences of Yahwistic practices and to force the population to conform to the new regulations. He caused swine to be sacrificed in the Temple on the Greek altar; and he forced the priests to eat the sacrificed flesh, so that they became unclean and unfit for the discharge of their proper functions.

To the loyal worshipers of Yahweh, this situation was intolerable. It would compel them to violate every high and holy ideal and to be untrue to their deepest loyalties. Many of the weaker sort fell in with the royal demands. But the bravest and best refused to conform. Among these was Mattathias, a priest of Modein, a village over-

looking the Dead Sea. One day the royal inspector came to Modein and ordered the Jews to celebrate a sacrifice to Zeus. As a renegade Jewish priest was in the act of offering the idolatrous sacrifice, Mattathias leaped upon him and slew him. Then he turned and slew the Syrian officials. Mattathias thereupon fled to the hills with his five stalwart sons, where kindred spirits joined them. Judas Maccabeus, the most vigorous of the sons of Mattathias, took the lead of the band; and the Maccabean revolt gained rapid headway. It was not halted until a Maccabean king sat upon the royal throne in Jerusalem. Meantime, the patriots and zealots recaptured the city of Jerusalem, with the exception of the citadel, and proceeded to cleanse the Temple and to rededicate it to the worship of Yahweh. The dedication took place on the twenty-fifth of Chislev (=December), 165 B.C., just three years from the day upon which the first pagan offerings had defiled it.[1]

The Book of Daniel comes out of the midst of the Maccabean struggle. It was written as a pamphlet for those times. It was an attempt to hearten the Jews in the great conflict. It sought as best it could to sustain the "morale" of the faithful. It did this in two general ways. First, it told a series of stories from the past which furnished encouraging evidence of the fact that Yahweh had taken care of his servants in the past amid all kinds of dangers. Ought he not to be trusted to care for his people again in their time of need? Second, it gave a series of visions granted to holy men in days gone by. In these visions, the entire history of the Jews in particular and the world in general is foretold down to and beyond

[1] Our chief sources of information for the history of the Maccabean period are I Maccabees and Josephus.

the Maccabean period. These visions promised deliverance and glory to the Jews in the days to come. They accurately foretold the history from the time of the exile up to the Maccabean period, at least so far as the ordinary man knew. Could they not, therefore, be trusted in their account of the period yet to come? It was all in the future for Daniel; he had been correct in his predictions for a period covering approximately four hundred years; surely it would be unreasonable to distrust him in his predictions for the next few years!

The stories from the past were admirably selected for the purpose of the Maccabean author. They bore directly and immediately upon the needs and problems of his own day.[1] The first story (chap. 1) relates how Daniel and his three friends were chosen with other young men to undergo a course of training in preparation for entry into the king's service. The best of food and drink was provided for them from the king's table, but Daniel and his friends could not eat and drink these things and be true to the requirements of their own religion. Hence they besought the chief officer and obtained permission to go on trial for ten days, during which time their diet was made up of nothing but pulse and water. At the end of the period of probation their appearance and condition were better than what those who had eaten the royal viands could show. So they were permitted to adhere to this simple diet for the entire period of three years. At the end, they were brought in with the other youths before the king and were found superior to them all, not only in

[1] It is quite probable that the materials in Daniel, chaps. 1–6, were in existence for some time before the Maccabean period. But the maker of the Book of Daniel recognized their value for his purpose and incorporated them, with the necessary editing, in his book.

appearance, but also in wisdom and knowledge. They were indeed "ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his realm." They therefore were chosen as the king's attendants and advisers. A story like this was great encouragement to a people who were ordered to eat unclean food and were fighting for the privilege of keeping themselves "clean" and undefiled. The God who helped Daniel and his friends in days past would also help his people now in a similar situation.

The second story (chap. 2) represents Nebuchadrezzar as having dreamed a dream which he could not remember. He called all the wise men and magicians of Babylon and ordered them to tell him what the dream was and what it signified. They declared this to be an impossible task and an unheard-of demand. But he insisted and enforced his demand by the threat of death to all the wise men if they failed to furnish the necessary information. At this juncture, Daniel asked for a little time, which was granted. He and his three friends at once betook themselves to prayer, and the dream and its meaning were revealed to Daniel in a vision from Yahweh. Daniel thereupon communicated his information to the king, telling him what he had dreamed and what the dream signified. In doing this he impressed upon the king the fact that none but Yahweh could enable his servants to know and interpret this dream. The king prostrated himself before Daniel in acknowledgment of the power of Daniel's God, and at once appointed Daniel viceroy of the whole of Babylonia, with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego as his chief officers. In this way, the writer of the book emphasizes the supremacy of Yahweh, the God of Judah, over all the gods of the empire. The interpretation of the king's vision

may be indicated, for it is in brief outline the foundation of all the visions in the second portion of the book. Nebuchadrezzar is represented by the head of gold. The next kingdom inferior to his was that of the Persians. The third, or brazen kingdom, was thought of by the writer as the kingdom of the Medes. The fourth kingdom was that of Alexander the Great. The "division" of that kingdom represents the separation of Alexander's great empire into the kingdom of Syria, under the Seleucids, and the kingdom of Egypt, under the Ptolemies. In the days of this divided kingdom, the messianic Kingdom is to come into being and to overthrow all existing powers, after which it will continue in power forever.

The story of the fiery furnace is told in the third chapter. Nebuchadrezzar is said to have set up a golden image on the plain of Dura and to have ordered all men everywhere to bow in worship before it whenever the trumpets should blow. The report was brought to him that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refused to worship the image that he had erected. Nebuchadrezzar, filled with rage, sent for the three Jews and ordered them on pain of death by fire to worship his image. To this demand the young Jews replied that if their God was able he would deliver them from the king's power; but if not, yet they would not compromise themselves by worshiping the king's image. The king, thoroughly enraged at this defiance, ordered them hurled into the burning fiery furnace, which had been heated seven times as hot as usual for this especial occasion. Indeed, so fierce was the heat that the men who hurled the youths in were themselves slain by it. But, *mirabile dictu*, the Jewish youths were seen walking in the midst of the flames accompanied by a

fourth person who looked like a celestial being. The king in amazement ordered the young men to come forth from the furnace, when it was seen that the fire had failed to touch them in any way, save to burn away the bonds with which they had been bound. There was not even any smell of fire upon them! The result of this extraordinary event was that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were promoted and that Nebuchadrezzar issued a decree prohibiting his subjects from saying anything against the God of the Jews, the supreme God. A story of this sort that was believed would, of course, embolden the Jews immeasurably in their loyalty to God. The "if not" of Shadrach and his friends may seem to have required extraordinary faith, but no greater faith than was actually exhibited by the Maccabeans in the great struggle.[1]

The fourth chapter relates King Nebuchadrezzar's experience. He dreamed a dream which none of his counselors could understand. But Daniel understood it and interpreted it as meaning that Yahweh was going to smite Nebuchadrezzar in the midst of his glory and power with madness, so that for seven years he would be an associate of the beasts of the field. After that period was over, he would return to his throne and acknowledge the power of the true God. All this came upon Nebuchadrezzar as foretold, and the restored Nebuchadrezzar became a follower and worshiper of Yahweh. How applicable this story was to the Maccabean situation! Antiochus was commonly regarded as at least half crazed. What a comfort to feel that he would be brought to his senses and made to see the glory of God!

The feast of Belshazzar is described in the fifth chap-

[1] See e.g., I Macc. 1:62 f.; II Macc. 6:18 ff.; 7:1 ff.

ter. As the king was celebrating a great feast at which the captured vessels from the Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem were being used by the king and his wives and concubines and were thus being desecrated in the vilest manner, the fingers of a hand appeared on a wall of the banqueting hall and wrote some mysterious hieroglyphs thereupon. The king was filled with terror and appealed to the magicians for an interpretation, but in vain. Then the queen came to the rescue, suggesting that Daniel, who had been highly honored by Nebuchadrezzar,[1] should be called, for he had solved such riddles before. Daniel came in response to the summons of the king, and proceeded to deliver a pointed homily to him upon the way in which Nebuchadrezzar had been punished by Yahweh for his failure to acknowledge the lordship of Yahweh, and the fact that Belshazzar seemed to have learned nothing from the experience of his great predecessor. Therefore Yahweh had sent this message to the king. The message consisted of three Aramaic words, the first one being repeated: *Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin.* These are interpreted as meaning: *mene*, "God has numbered your kingdom and brought it to an end"; *tekel*, "You are weighed in the balances and found wanting"; *peres*,[2] "Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." The king at once commanded that Daniel be decorated and made one of the three chief rulers of the kingdom. That very

[1] Nebuchadrezzar is here called "father of Belshazzar," but Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus, who was a usurper, and in no way related to Nebuchadrezzar. Nor was Belshazzar "king," as he is here called. Nabonidus reigned up to the last minute of the Babylonian Empire's existence.

[2] This is the singular form, while *upharsin* is the plural form preceded by the conjunction meaning "and."

night Belshazzar was slain.[1] Belshazzar is but Antiochus Epiphanes in disguise. The fate dealt out to him is what the Maccabeans ardently desired for Antiochus. His treatment of the sacred vessels is of one piece with the attitude of Antiochus toward the Temple and the Jewish religion. Such a story as this would do much to maintain the morale of the struggling Jews.

The last of these stories carries us on into the time of Darius, the Mede.[2] He had given Daniel high place in the empire, and was contemplating giving him the chief executive position. This aroused great jealousy among rival officials, and they set about to compass his ruin. They realized that the only vulnerable point in his life was his religion. Consequently, they persuaded the king to issue a decree that no prayer or request should be addressed to any god or man for the next thirty days on pain of death for any such offender. Daniel naturally learned of this, but he went into his upper room, with windows wide open toward Jerusalem, and prayed three times a day, as was his custom. His enemies, who were on the watch, reported this to Darius and insisted that Daniel should not be made an exception, but should be cast into a den of lions, in accordance with the law. The king protested and pleaded in Daniel's behalf, but in vain. The royal decree could not be set aside. With the king's

[1] On the day of Belshazzar's death, the Persians had already captured Babylon and were in possession of the empire. Hence Belshazzar's power to bestow honors of any value was gone.

[2] There was no kingdom of the Medes in control of Babylonia. The Babylonians were immediately succeeded by the Persians, under Cyrus. Probably Darius I, the Persian, is really meant. His reign lasted from 521–485 B.C. This would make Daniel to have been almost one hundred years old. However, Darius is thought of here (Dan. 6:29) as having preceded Cyrus the Persian. But no such king is known.

reluctant consent, Daniel was taken in the evening and thrown among the lions. The king spent a bad night, sleepless and fasting. At break of day he hurried to the lion's den and called out in anxiety to Daniel to know whether or not he was alive. Daniel replied that he was unharmed and had been protected by an angel of God. He was at once released, and his persecutors, with their wives and children, were thrown to the hungry lions, who made short work of them. Then Darius issued an order that Daniel's God be worshiped and feared throughout the empire. This victory for Daniel and his God is said to have been made possible because Daniel "trusted in his God."[1] The moral for the Maccabean saints was plain and the promise alluring. Inspired by such hopes, they remained loyal to their ideals and faithful to their God through hard and trying experiences, until they reached the desired goal.

The second half of the book is given up to the record of four great visions seen by Daniel the prophet in the first and third years of Belshazzar, the first year of Darius (the son of Ahasuerus),[2] and the third year of Cyrus. They all say the same thing, but in the last vision it is worked out in much greater detail than in the others. The method of the visions is to begin with the exile period and skip rapidly over the early empires until the Greek Empire is reached. Then the narrative expands into more or less detail and becomes quite specific. But upon passing on into the unknown future, vagueness and generalities become the rule. Indeed, it is surprising that there is as much of the definite and specific in the

[1] Dan. 6:25.

[2] I.e., Xerxes; no such king as Darius, the son of Xerxes, is known.

genuine predictions as there is. If the writer had been primarily concerned to "play safe," he would have given less opportunity for error.

The first vision[1] represents four beasts rising out of the sea. These four beasts are said to stand for four kings that are to rise to power. Practically nothing is said about the first three, but they were representative of Babylonia, Medea, and Persia, respectively. The individual kings were probably Nebuchadrezzar, Darius the Mede, and Cyrus. The fourth beast is described as terrible and dreadful and is given much attention. This was clearly Alexander the Great, the representative of Greece. The ten horns of this beast represent the kings that shall arise out of the kingdom of Greece. This is the way of describing the successors of Alexander the Great prior to the accession of Antiochus Epiphanes. These successors were Seleucus I (312–280 B.C.), Antiochus I (279–261 B.C.), Antiochus II (260–246 B.C.), Seleucus II (245–226 B.C.), Seleucus III (225–223 B.C.), Antiochus III the Great (222–187 B.C.), and Seleucus IV (186–176 B.C.). The last three of the ten were "plucked up" by Antiochus IV, and were therefore his contemporaries. Judgments vary as to their identity, but they may have been Heliodorus, prime minister of Seleucus IV, who sought the crown but never held it; Demetrius, son of Seleucus IV and the lawful heir to his father's throne, who was held prisoner in Rome; and Ptolemy VII, king of Egypt, whom some wished to have as king, had not Antiochus supplanted him.[2] Following these ten horns came "a little horn," in which "were eyes like those of a man and a mouth speaking great

[1] Daniel, chap. 7.

[2] See Driver's *Commentary*, pp. 101 f., for the varying views.

things." This is none other than Antiochus Epiphanes, who, it is said, will "think to change the seasons and the law" and "will wear out the saints of the Most High." But the vision sees the Ancient of Days upon his throne surrounded by myriads of angels. He judges the beasts and condemns the fourth beast to be burned with fire. Not only so, but the seer beholds "one like unto a man" who was brought before the great throne of God and was given dominion forever over all nations and tongues. This is the Messiah, and he hands over the kingdom forever to the "saints of the Most High"—in other words, the faithful Jews. However, the dominion of Antiochus is to last for "a time, two times, and half a time," i.e., for three and a half years. This period is best reckoned as lasting from the edict of Antiochus issued in the summer of 168 B.C. to the rededication of the Temple in December, 165 B.C.

The second vision[1] again makes use of animals and horns. First of all, a ram with two horns appeared, the one horn being higher than the other and coming up later. This was later interpreted to Daniel as representative of the two kingdoms of the Medes and the Persians. Then a goat came into view with a conspicuous horn on his head. He overthrew the ram and swept away all opponents. But the horn was finally broken and in place of it came up four horns. This was explained to Daniel as representing the kingdom of Greece with its great world-conqueror, Alexander the Great. He in turn was succeeded by his four generals, under whom the empire was broken up into four kingdoms and correspondingly weakened. Out of them in turn came up a little horn which waxed strong and magnified itself against God. This was, of

[1] Daniel, chap. 8.

course, Antiochus IV, who did away with the continual burnt-offering in 168 B.C. Daniel heard a voice asking how long this should continue and another voice answering: "Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then will the sanctuary be victorious." This seems to mean that the period during which the continual burnt-offering, that was offered morning and evening, is to cease will be eleven hundred and fifty days. This would be about three years and two months; the actual period, according to I Macc. 1:54; 4:52–53, was three years and ten days. Finally, Antiochus is to be "broken without hand," i.e., by some divine agency, not by human forces.[1]

The third vision[2] came at the conclusion of a long period of prayer on Daniel's part in which he besought Yahweh to intervene in behalf of his afflicted people. It is an outpouring of a penitent soul that is admirable in conception and beautiful in expression. It is one of the great recorded prayers of history. The vision itself is the shortest of all visions. It is wholly chronological in form. "The man Gabriel" informs Daniel that a total period of seventy weeks has been decreed during which the people of Judah are to suffer for their sins. That these "weeks" are to be understood as made up of years instead of days is clear from the way in which the period is worked out. Jeremiah had predicted "seventy years" of punishment; but that period had long since expired; hence the later writers had expanded it to seven times seventy years by changing years into septads of years.[3] This would bring

[1] Antiochus died suddenly in 164 B.C. at Tabae in Persia of some mysterious ailment (I Macc. 6:5–16).

[2] Daniel, chap. 9.

[3] The foundation of this method of interpretation was laid in Lev. 26:18, 21, 24, 28, and II Chron. 36:20 f.

the entire period of four hundred and ninety years to an end in 97 B.C. The error involved in this was due to the writer's incomplete knowledge of the period between the return from exile and his own times. Gabriel then proceeds to break up the seventy weeks of years into three periods. The first week of years is to extend from the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. to the coming of Cyrus in 538 B.C., a total of forty-nine years. Cyrus was called "Anointed" or "Messiah" by the unknown prophet of the exile.[1] Then for sixty-two weeks the city is to stand rebuilt, but in continual trouble. This period is too long; it shows an error in the writer's calculations. But this error was part of the common reckoning of his times. All other computations of the period known to us from the ancient world show the same or a similar mistake.[2] The date of the close of this second period of weeks which the writer had in mind is clearly indicated by the fact with which he closes the period (vs. 26). The cutting off of an anointed one to which he refers is, apparently, the murder of Onias III at the instigation of his rival Menelaus in 171 B.C.

The closing week of years beginning in 171 B.C. would end in 165 B.C. The prince of the period is naturally Antiochus IV. He destroys the city and the Temple. He makes a firm covenant with many, who are, of course, the renegades who have gone over body and soul to Hellenism. He suspends the services of the Temple and the prescribed daily sacrifices for half a week. This Antiochus actually did, so that there was no regular offering from the fifteenth of Chislev, 168 B.C., to the twenty-fifth of Chislev, 165 B.C. During that period the altar of Zeus was "causing appalment" in the Temple. But utter destruc-

[1] Isa. 45:1; cf. 44:26, 28; 45:13. [2] See Driver, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

tion will come upon the king and the abhorrent altar will be destroyed. The Maccabeans restored the temple rites in 165 B.C., but Antiochus lived until 164 B.C.

The last vision is of extended character.[1] It is more detailed and specific than any of the preceding visions. It covers the years immediately prior to and including the Maccabean revolt with much particularity and definiteness. But after the promise of the "little help" furnished by the Maccabean revolt the narrative fades away again into generalities. This vision is represented as having come after a period of fasting and prayer that lasted three weeks. The actual vision that greeted Daniel's eyes as he reports it was that of a glorious being in the form of a man, the sight of whom overcame him. But an intermediary agent strengthened and sustained Daniel so that he was able at length to listen to the words of the glorious one. He is told that there will be yet three more kings of Persia after Cyrus. The fourth king of Persia will stir up a war against Greece. This is, of course, a reference to the campaigns of Xerxes against Greece, made famous by the great battles at Thermopylae, Marathon, and Salamis. The seven or eight remaining kings of Persia are ignored. The narrative passes right on at once to the rise of Alexander the Great.[2] The downfall of Alexander and the division of his empire among his four generals is being briefly sketched. Then the prediction passes on to the reorganization of the territory into the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt.[3]

The first king of the southern kingdom was Ptolemy I, of Egypt. The prince who rose up under him and became stronger than his master was Seleucus I, the founder of

[1] Daniel, chaps. 10–12. [2] Dan. 11:3, 4. [3] Dan. 11:5 f.

the Seleucidean dynasty in Syria. The prediction then passes on to the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–247 B.C.), who sought to end the long struggle with Syria for the possession of Palestine by marrying his daughter, Berenice, to Antiochus II (261–246 B.C.), of Syria, stipulating that Antiochus should divorce the wife he already had and disinherit his two sons. Thus Syria stood in a fair way to become part of the Egyptian domain. But Ptolemy died after two years and all his plans came to naught. Antiochus took back his first wife and divorced the Egyptian princess, Berenice. Laodice, the first wife, determined to make assurance doubly sure, murdered her husband and induced her own son, Seleucus, to make his own claim to the throne secure by murdering Berenice and her baby.

The murder of Berenice was not unavenged. Her brother, Ptolemy Euergetes (247–222 B.C.), invaded Syria and pushed as far east as Babylon. He was prevented from making himself master of Syria as a whole by disturbances in his own country which forced his return home. He came back a victor loaded with spoils.[1] Seleucus recovered his territory in 242 B.C., but when he invaded Egypt he was defeated in 240 B.C. and fled back home.

The conflicts of Seleucus III (226–223 B.C.) and Antiochus III (223–187 B.C.), known as "the Great," with Ptolemy IV (222–205 B.C.) and Ptolemy V (205–181 B.C.) are then "foretold."[2] These ended in the great battle at Raphia (205 B.C.) in which Antiochus was completely defeated.[3] After twelve years, during which Antiochus had made his reputation as "the Great" by his conquests

[1] Dan. 11:7–9. [2] Dan. 11:10–19. [3] Dan. 11:11, 12.

in the east, a treaty was made between Syria and Macedonia for a joint attack upon Egypt, now under the rule of an infant king, and a division of its territory. This brought about the end of the power of Egypt in Syria and Palestine. Antiochus made peace with Egypt and cemented it by marrying his daughter, Cleopatra, "the daughter of women," to Ptolemy Epiphanes, king of Egypt (194–193 B.C.). But Antiochus lost the support of Rome which was transferred to Ptolemy. These proceedings are summarized in verses 13–17.

The downfall of Antiochus III was rapid and complete. He had ambitions toward the west. These brought him into conflict with Rome. He was defeated by the Romans at Thermopylae in 191 B.C., and again at Magnesia in Asia Minor in 190 B.C., where his losses were terrific. This brought his ambitions for westward expansion to a hopeless end. He was followed by his son, Seleucus IV (187–185 B.C.), who was forced to pay heavy tribute for nine years to Rome. This king is evidently referred to here as the one who sends a tax collector throughout the kingdom.[1]

The successor of Seleucus was a "contemptible person," viz., Antiochus Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.). The son of Seleucus was the lawful heir to the throne, but he was a mere child and he was held in Rome as a hostage. Hence Antiochus could and did obtain the crown by "flatteries." He overcame all opposition. One of his first acts was to depose Onias III, the high priest in Jerusalem, spoken of here as "the prince of the Covenant." Antiochus is described here as one who kept no promises, as having risen to power through the support of a small but powerful group, and

[1] Dan. 11:18–20.

as being characterized by lavish prodigality with resources obtained by plunder and robbery. This is in keeping with what historians say of Antiochus.[1] This, however, the seer declares, will last only so long as God wills.[2]

The vision then goes on to predict the first campaign of Antiochus against Egypt (170 B.C.). It foretells the defeat of Ptolemy Philometor, due in part to the defection of his own followers, some of whom, as a matter of fact, did desert to the enemy. Reference is also made to the strained relations between Antiochus and Ptolemy after the latter had fallen into the power of the former, who professed to be his friend, though in reality he was striving to add Egypt to his own dominions. Then the visit of Antiochus to Jerusalem and his desecration and robbery of the Temple are foretold in general just as they occurred.[3] The second expedition against Egypt follows at once in the vision. The prohibition of further advance sent by Rome through Popilius Laena which caused Antiochus to turn back and vent his spleen upon Jerusalem is plainly described. The abolition of the continual burnt-offering and the erection of the altar of Zeus in the holy place are clearly mentioned. But the opposition of the faithful and the rise of the Maccabeans are recorded as affording a "little help." The conduct of Antiochus in setting at naught all religions and the one true God and in setting up for himself a "god of fortresses" is next described. This, too, is a transcript from the actual course of conduct adopted by Antiochus.[4]

[1] See I Macc. 1:19; 3:30 f.; Polybius xxvi. 10:9–11; xxxi. 4. 9; Athenagoras x. 52; Livy xli. 20.

[2] Dan. 11:12–24.

[3] Dan. 11:25–29.

[4] Dan. 11:29–39.

Finally, a new invasion of Egypt and Palestine is pictured. This is to be successful for a time, but then Antiochus will hear bad news from the north and east; and on his way back will come to his end "between the seas and the beauteous holy mountain."[1] This must mean on the Maritime Plain skirting the Mediterranean. Here the seer is actually predicting the course of events. He was correct in that Antiochus did meet his death in 164 B.C. He was mistaken in locating the scene of that death, for it actually occurred in far-off Persia.

The prediction continues in chapter 12. A time of indescribable trouble is to follow the death of Antiochus. But every faithful Jew whose name is found recorded "in the book" will escape. This is evidently the register of the citizens of the messianic Kingdom. This includes those living on the earth and also those faithful who have passed away. For they will be brought back through a resurrection to share in an everlasting messianic life. On the other hand, the wicked will be brought back to life to receive "shame and everlasting contempt." Daniel is then represented as asking how long until these things should come to pass. He was told that it would be three and a half years. To Daniel's further request for more specific information, the answer was made that from the time of the cessation of the continual burnt-offering until the messianic manifestation should be twelve hundred and ninety days. This would bring the period to an end on June 6, 164 B.C. But the full appearance of the messianic glory will not be seen for another forty-five days after June 6.

It is difficult for us to understand how such visionary and unreal representations could serve the end their au-

[1] Dan. 11:40–45.

thors had in creating or recording them. But the psychological point of view of that period was in some respects totally different from that of our own age. We lay stress upon prosaic facts and we demand reality. That age, in Judah at least, wished to get away from reality. The real was too hard to be endured. They took refuge readily in the imagination. They did not shrink from seeking to change the real into the ideal. They believed not so much in the "God of things as they are," but with all their strength in the "God of things as they ought to be." They believed fervently that what ought to be would be. And they did not fail to put themselves enthusiastically into the task of preparing the way for the coming of the ideal. They actually did things that seemed impossible, and made sacrifices that are almost incredible. They fought and suffered, buoyed up by stories and visions such as are found in the Book of Daniel. In the strength of the faith and enthusiasm nourished by this kind of reading and meditation they finally threw off the yoke of the Syrian tyrant and re-established a kingdom of Judah in the holy city.[1]

[1] For the ethical significance of the apocalyptic point of view, see J. M. Powis Smith, *The Moral Life of the Hebrews* (1923), pp. 313–18.

CHAPTER XVII

CONCLUSION

The prophets were the crowning glory of Israel. They began their course amid the mists of the low-lying valleys; they ended it upon the sunlit mountain tops. Other peoples of the ancient world had seers, soothsayers, and necromancers; Israel alone carried on through these lower levels into the higher altitudes of prophecy. The prophets were the distinguishing feature of Israel's life. The institutions of the Hebrew industrial and social life were in no essential respect different from or better than the corresponding institutions in the life of her neighbors. The more we learn about the peoples of the world of Western Asia in the Hebrew period, the more similarities do we discover between them and the Hebrews. Even the institutionalized ethics of Israel as found in her earliest codes of law are in many respects on the same plane as the ethical principles embodied in the Hittite code of laws. It is not until the prophets by their splendid courage and clear vision had lifted the life of Israel to a higher level that we are able to make comparisons that always redound to the glory of the Hebrews. It is safe to say that had it not been for the prophets the people of Israel would scarcely have been heard of in the world's history. The prophets gave imperishable distinction and value to the record of Hebrew life.

How did they do it? They were not gifted with knowledge or ability in a sufficiently greater degree than that

possessed by their contemporaries to furnish the explanation. They shared the world-view of their times with all its limitations in the way of ignorance and superstition. They do not commend themselves to us by their greater intelligence. Nor were they in one respect, at least, better patriots than those whom they criticized and opposed so strenuously. In devotion to the interests of the country, the men who fought to the bitter end and died rather than surrender the liberty of their beloved country, as did the Northern Israelites in 720 B.C. and the Jews in 586 B.C., can scarcely be granted lower rank than the prophets who told them their struggle was all in vain, and did their best to get them to lay down their arms. It is not at all necessary to give the prophets credit for greater sincerity and singleness of purpose in the formulation of their policies than those that were possessed by some of their bitterest opponents. The difference between them was rather one of standpoint and direction. The opponents of the prophets were men who were satisfied with the existing order. Their interests were involved in the maintenance of things as they were, and they were unable to see beyond their interests, which at the same time seemed to them in all sincerity to be the interests of the country at large. Disasters did but spur them to greater offerings and more intense efforts to propitiate an angry God. They could imagine nothing else than that Israel's God should glorify his people at the expense of their foes. The prophets, on the other hand, though starting with the same principle as the politicians, viz., that piety and prosperity were almost equivalent terms, probed deeper in their search for the meaning of the disastrous course of events in which they were involved. They were not so wedded to the past as to be

deaf to the voice of God in the present. They did not break with the past and strike out upon an untracked, open country; they held on to the past firmly with one hand and reached out into the future constantly with the other, never letting go of the assurance of the present until they had laid firm hold of some new certainty. Thus they moved slowly but steadily forward.

The prophets set themselves the task of interpreting the history of their times in terms of God. Changing events kept them ever alert. With such a task before them, they were forced by the disasters that befell Israel to do some hard and painful thinking. They were forced by the history of their own times to revise their messages again and again in order to keep pace with the progress of the age. The Assyrians and Babylonians forced them to revise their conception of Yahweh from time to time until they finally made him God of the universe. The tragedies of Hebrew history challenged their best efforts and caused them to abandon the doctrine that goodness always pays substantial dividends in the coin of the world and to move forward to the conviction that goodness and the fear of God are in and of themselves supreme blessings and are to be cherished for their own sake, no matter what the course of events may be. They started with a message that gave little attention to the needs and interests of the individual, but concentrated itself upon the welfare of the state and the community. They ended by making the individual person's fate a matter of vital interest to God, and by looking forward to a Kingdom of God made up of regenerated individuals. They began their career by making Israel the favorite of God, and by looking upon all other peoples as destined to minister to Israel's glory.

They ended by making Israel the "Servant of God" upon whom great sufferings were imposed by God in order that the spectacle of the suffering servant might open the eyes of the nations to their sins and lead them to repentance and grateful recognition of the goodness of God. When the national history of Israel came to a disastrous end, they refused to surrender their faith and persisted in painting pictures of a glorious messianic age in which Israel should be rewarded for all she had suffered. The darker the outlook was, the brighter did their hopes glow.

When we seriously consider and thoroughly appreciate what the prophets did for Israel and through Israel for humanity, we inevitably share the sentiment breathed forth by an ancient student of prophecy:

> Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets!

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